

THE COMING JUDGES WAR ■ SUPREME COURT SANCTIONS THEFT

AUGUST 1, 2005

The American Conservative

We don't need an exit strategy...

...we need an **EXIT**

DAMN THE TORPEDOES

In his latest column, Pat Buchanan appears opposed to the battle in Iraq (July 18). He refers to possible political ramifications, but this war is beyond politics. The future of Western civilization is at stake.

The combat in Iraq is not a war but a battle in a war that was started 1,400 years ago. The cult of a self-proclaimed prophet has expanded to more than 1.2 billion people, and the disciples of this devil intend to bring the entire earth under the rule of Allah. Currently, Western nations are the soft targets.

The meek enjoy liberties after the strong have fought, sacrificed, and died. If we don't resist Islam, our culture has no future. There are two approaches: let posterity fight its own wars when the time comes, or maintain a place in the world for Jesus, our posterity, and Western civilization.

Damn the torpedoes. Let's get down and dirty. Kill the bastards. Wars are dirty. It is wrong to elevate ourselves above their standards. They take no prisoners. Neither should we.

God bless America,
WARREN E. BOISSELLE
Virginia Beach, Va.

DOLLAR DUMP DOUBTER

I was a big fan of Paul Craig Roberts when he worked for President Reagan. In his article "Who Owns the Dollar?" (July 4), Mr. Roberts states, "In the meantime, even a small country could pop the U.S. housing bubble by dumping dollar reserves."

What, exactly, are these "dollar reserves" and what, exactly, would the "small country" do to "dump" them? I assume that he is not saying that he fears that (for example) Indonesia might toss a large number of \$100 bills into an active volcano.

Now, a "small country" owning U.S. Treasury bonds could sell them. Then they would have dollars and somebody else who used to have the dollars would

have the Treasury bonds. Is Roberts saying that by doing this, the "small country" would "pop the U.S. housing bubble"?

Today, long-term U.S. interest rates fell again, to 3.90 percent on the 10-year Treasury bond and to 1.66 percent on the 30-year Treasury Inflation-Protected Security. The world financial markets issue a long-term interest-rate forecast everyday, and they "put their money where their mouth is."

Roberts needs to explain what is driving the financial markets' view of the prospects for U.S. interest rates, which, presumably, are what underpin the U.S. housing bubble.

LOUIS R. WOODHILL
via e-mail

Paul Craig Roberts replies:

If South Korea, for example, were to dump its \$200 billion of U.S. Treasuries on the bond market, the large increase in supply would drive down bond prices and raise interest rates. The only way this could be avoided would be if a buyer stood ready to take the \$200 billion in bonds off the market at the current price. Theoretically, there might be two countries that could do this: Japan and China. Japan could use its own currency to purchase the bonds and might benefit from halting the rise of its currency by increasing its supply. As China is unwilling to let its currency be traded (as traders could then force China off its dollar peg), China would not purchase the bonds with its own currency. It could purchase the bonds only if it held \$200 billion in tradable currencies. China and Japan have an interest in protecting the dollar and U.S. interest rates because they benefit from their large trade surpluses with us. However, neither has to come to America's rescue, and if tensions were to be high, over Taiwan, for example, China might well dump its \$600 billion, in which case there would be no hope whatsoever for the dollar and U.S. interest rates.

If any one country, however small, were to dump U.S. Treasuries, the most likely effect would be to start other countries doing the same. According to the Bank for International Settlements, Asian countries—China included—have in recent months reduced their holdings of dollar assets by diversifying into other currencies.

The apparent demise of the European Union politically has raised questions about the euro's sustainability and given the dollar a longer period during which it can be over-issued, ultimately leading to a larger crisis. Once an alternative reserve currency comes on the scene, the dollar is toast.

NO ENCORE PEACE MARCHES

Scott McConnell explains and bemoans the absence of a peace movement—similar to the peace movement during the war in Vietnam—to protest against the war in Iraq (July 4).

I participated in that earlier movement and am glad that there is nothing like it today. Antiwar demonstrators, with their violence, obscenities, and their expression of anti-American and pro-Communist sentiments, angered the American people and provoked the electorate to vote for hawkish politicians who prolonged the war.

Without something like that now to distract the voters, public opinion is already turning against the war in Iraq. If Congress does not force a withdrawal from Iraq, its members will be replaced in 2006.

JOHN ENGELMAN
via e-mail

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[CULTURE]

WE AREN'T THE WORLD

It's nice to Feel Good while Doing Good, and the hundreds of thousands who gathered in London, Philadelphia, and other cities to hear music and alleviate African poverty seemed to have a great time. Whether Live 8 organizer Bob Geldof's demands had any measurable impact is another matter.

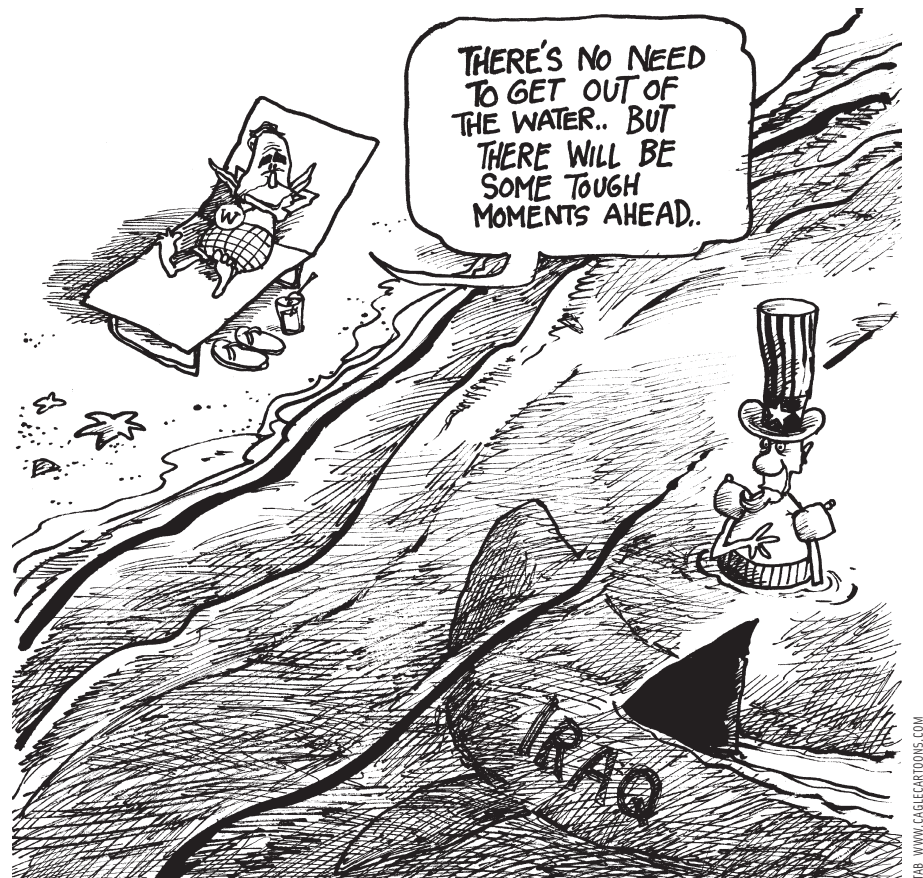
It's a kind of Western narcissism to imagine that financial decisions made by eight industrial countries are the key to the matter. An African child dies of hunger every few seconds—this is the sort of statistic that inflamed Dickens's Mrs. Jellyby a century and a half ago. Yet not a word was uttered from the Live 8 stages calling for Robert Mugabe to step down though he has transformed Zimbabwe, once one of the continents' richer economies, into rank poverty in the course of two decades. Nor a mention of civil war in the Congo. As Niall Ferguson pointed out, it's so much more satisfying for our modern-day Jellybys to believe that Africa's woes are the responsibility of those uncool rich men who lead the G8 countries. But, hey, there was some really good music.

[IMMIGRATION]

DON'T ASK, DONT TELL

One way to fix answers you don't like is to stop asking questions. Just ask the Bush administration.

Though the White House took pains to package last year's guest-worker program as anything but amnesty, Mexican migrants—and the vast majority of the American public—saw it as exactly that. After the announcement, the Department of Homeland Security began distributing a questionnaire to apprehended border-jumpers. Now Judicial Watch has obtained those documents, and, to no one's surprise, 45 percent of the intercepted illegals stated that they



thought the president's plan made provision for them to stay.

According to Judicial Watch's president, Tom Fitton, when 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. got wind of the surveys, Border Patrol agents were given "White House approved talking points" instead. They were told, "do not talk about amnesty, increase in apprehensions or give comparisons of past immigration reform proposals" and "do not provide statistics on apprehension spikes or past amnesty data."

But denying the result of a bad policy doesn't redeem it: if it quacks like an amnesty, it probably is.

[CONSERVATISM]

FREE-MARKET ZOOS

Late last month the American Enterprise Institute hosted a panel discussion on the Future of Conservatism—and who better to serve on such a panel than Newt Gingrich? Joining the former Speaker of the House was current Indiana Congressman Mike Pence, chairman of the Republican Study Committee. Since this was AEI, David Frum served as monitor.

What Pence had to say was admirable enough: he criticized the president's pre-

scription-drug plan for Medicare, cited Russell Kirk a few times, and made no secret of his pro-life commitments. And Gingrich? After telling the audience that he believed in "regulation without bureaucracy" and the "Travelocity model of health care," he unbosomed a fresh idea sure to set the world atwitter—privatizing the National Zoo. Make it more like the San Diego Zoo, he demanded; the Smithsonian just can't handle it.

As for Iraq, the event brought to mind an old bit of advice from Basil Fawlty about Germans: "Don't mention the war." Newt did mention it, in passing, only to pin the blame for "mismanagement" squarely on Paul Bremer. If only there had been an Iraqi leader installed from day one—no need to name names, and Newt did not—all would have been well.

If this is conservatism's future, we'll look to the past.

[POSTWAR]

DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT HISTORY

Americans may need to be bathed continuously in the historical lessons of appeasement and the Holocaust, but some history gets old pretty fast. At least that's the view of Paul Wolfowitz,

chief architect of the Iraq War, who now has a busy new post at the World Bank dispensing money to the Third World and can't be bothered to think about history as recent as America getting itself into Iraq. Asked about the Downing Street memo—the British intelligence documents that concluded that the administration had “fixed” its Iraq intelligence in order to justify launching the war—Wolfowitz, who as it happened helped establish the Pentagon shop in which the intelligence fixing was done, really didn't see the point. He didn't want to get “distracted”—he was too concerned with “people struggling with very real problems to keep going back into history.”

We wonder if the American people will take a similarly dismissive view of this very recent and very relevant part of their history. A Zogby poll reports that 42 percent of American voters think that President Bush should be impeached if he did not tell the truth about the rationale for going into Iraq. Impeached. They for some reason are still interested in how the war started, perhaps because they have friends and family stationed in Iraq and understand that the current American policies there are only fueling the jihadist terror networks.

Not Wolfowitz, however. History is just a distraction. He's moved on. But maybe, just maybe, one day justice will catch up with him.

[NEOCONS]

MARTYR IN OUR MIDST

An amusing window into the neocon mindset opened in a recent *New Yorker* article on AIPAC, the influential pro-Israel lobby whose former officials are currently under a investigation for seeking classified information in order better to prod George W. Bush to attack Iran, a key Israeli foreign-policy goal. At its recent conference, devoted in great part

to dire warnings about the Iran “threat,” AIPAC loudly proclaimed, “Israel is an American value!”

The magazine reported that when Larry Franklin, the Pentagon official accused of feeding classified documents to AIPAC principals, was talking on the phone to Michael Ledeen, one of the War Party's major Washington operatives, he said, “Don't worry, Sharansky survived the gulag, and I'll survive prison too.”

You gotta love it. This Pentagon underling, not much more than a useful junior attaché for the neocons and now in real trouble because spying against your government happens to be a crime, sees himself as the spiritual brother to the famous Soviet dissident and the American legal system as something akin to the gulag! We're waiting for comment from those professional arbiters of patriotism who had conniption fits when Amnesty International made the same analogy to Guantanamo—a comparison far less over the top.

[TRENDS]

NOT THE FATHERING KIND

With Europe in the midst of a baby bust, recent news from Madrid suggests that Catholic Spain will not be improving the continent's birthrates among married couples any time soon. That's because as of July 3, Spain became the third country in the world, after Belgium and the Netherlands, to extend legal recognition to homosexual marriages. And the club of legalizing nations is set to grow again soon—a bill to approve same-sex nuptials passed Canada's House of Commons on June 28.

What has President Bush been doing about the issue over here? Not much at all, which leads us to wonder if he isn't taking advice from neoconservatives on domestic policy as well—perhaps from Max Boot, who in a column last year told conservatives, “The Right Can't Win This Fight.” ■

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Scott McConnell

Executive Editor
Kara Hopkins

Assistant Editors
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Film Critic
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Editor Emeritus
Patrick J. Buchanan

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Judgment Day

Why has Teddy Kennedy reverted to his apocalyptic rhetoric of Bork-battle days? Why is Chuck Schumer threatening an inquisition of Bush nominees? Why is

the liberal media wailing that, to avoid a bloody Senate battle that will “divide” the country and “poison” our politics, Bush must nominate a “moderate” to the Supreme Court to replace Sandra Day O’Connor?

Answer: stark fear. If the Left loses the Supreme Court, the Left loses the Culture War. The Left loses the country. For 50 years, the high court has been its indispensable ally in the campaign to remake America into a secular and egalitarian society. The court has served as the battering ram of a social revolution that has to be imposed upon America—because it is hated by most Americans.

No Congress in the 1960s would have voted new rights for criminals or new restrictions on cops. No Congress would have outlawed the death penalty or declared abortion, naked dancing, and homosexual sodomy to be constitutional rights. No Congress would have permitted desecration of the flag, forced busing, or discrimination against white kids at state colleges. No Congress would have outlawed prayer, Bible-reading, and the Ten Commandments from classrooms. Liberalism had to be imposed by unelected judges who could not be removed by popular vote.

Under Earl Warren—“the biggest damn fool mistake I ever made,” said Ike—the court, controlled by New Deal Democrats unhappy with the country they lived in, impatient at the pace of change, anxious to wield real power, began to impose its will. Its first act of judicial supremacy was *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Though Eisenhower and many in Congress seethed over the court’s assertion of primary jurisdiction over race relations and education, they did nothing. Warren, famous heretofore for being the California attorney general who had demanded that all Japanese be interned in camps in World War II, was suddenly liberalism’s hero.

But the court’s subsequent decisions that ordered intercity busing to force integration tore the Democratic Party apart, North and South, and created a backlash that propelled the Wallace and Goldwater movements. I yet recall being invited onto a TV show in St. Louis in the early ’60s where the hostess asked me, to the laughter of her audience, if the Right thought Warren should be impeached. “No,” I replied, “we believe he should be hanged.”

In Alton, Illinois, where Phyllis Schlafly reigned, it was said there were so many billboards savaging Warren that when third-graders were asked on a test to identify the Chief Justice, half of them gave his first name as “Impeach.” The Warren Court, with its arrogance and radicalism, turned Middle America sharply to the Right.

In June 1968, when Nixon, who had campaigned on a pledge to name “strict constructionists” as justices, appeared a potential president, Warren cut a deal with LBJ and resigned as chief justice, contingent on the confirmation of a successor. LBJ nominated his crony, Justice Abe Fortas. But a bipartisan coalition blocked Fortas, who soon had to resign in a scandal.

But in the Judges War since 1968, which is ultimately about whether we shall be a judicial dictatorship where black robes rule or a democratic republic where the people rule, Republican presidents have failed more often than they have succeeded.

Nixon chose a great justice, Rehnquist. His other choices, Burger, Blackmun, and Powell, all voted for *Roe v. Wade*. Ford’s lone nominee, Stevens, was a lemon, as was Souter, named by Bush I. Reagan succeeded with Scalia but failed with his affirmative-action choice O’Connor and with Tony Kennedy, elevated when Bork was rejected.

Looking back at the great court battles since 1968, all have involved the character assassination of nominees seen as conservative: Haynsworth, Carswell, Bork, and Thomas. But for Clinton nominees Stephen Breyer and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, liberal judicial activists both, the Senate Republicans rolled over.

The Left gets it, but many Bush Republicans still don’t. They don’t like moral issues, and they don’t enlist in culture wars. But as the Left has turned the Supreme Court into a judicial tyranny more powerful than the president or Congress in deciding social and moral questions, Republicans have two choices: they can fight the Judges War, or they can lose the war.

Neutrality—a Bush choice of a non-controversial justice—will be, and will be seen by the president’s friends and enemies alike as a stacking of arms, a surrender, a cowardly retreat in the Culture War.

The Judges War is about Bush’s legacy and America’s future. No issue is more crucial. Whether America is kept safe for Christianity is more important than whether Iraq is made safe for democracy. ■

[exeunt omnes]

Failure Is an Option

“Staying the course” in Iraq is a losing strategy.

By Christopher Layne

WRITING IN THE *New York Times Magazine* about the Bush administration’s postmodernist approach to policymaking, Ron Suskind famously quoted a senior official: “We’re an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality.”

Since it first began contemplating invading Iraq and toppling Saddam Hussein’s regime in the aftermath of 9/11, the administration has been trying to create its own reality, and, as evidenced by President George W. Bush’s June 28 address on the status of the Iraq War, it continues to do so. But facts are stubborn things, and it’s increasingly obvious that the administration’s version of reality is completely disconnected from what really is happening in Iraq.

In recent weeks, events there have palpably been spinning out of control. Top U.S. military commanders have conceded both that the number of foreign jihadist fighters entering that country is increasing and that the Sunni insurgency has not weakened during the last six months. American military casualties are rising, and every day scores of Iraqi civilians and security personnel are killed in insurgent attacks. On the political front, despite heavy American pressure, the process of drafting a new Iraqi constitution is stalemated, and the Iraqi government shows little sign of being able to surmount the divide among Kurds, Shi’ites, and Sunnis that threatens to plunge Iraq into civil war.

The White House fantasy notwithstanding, in the days leading up to Bush’s speech, public-opinion surveys indicated that Americans were paying attention to reality. According to the latest *Washington Post*/ABC News poll, 53 percent believe the Iraq War was a mistake, and 52 percent say that Bush had “intentionally misled” the nation in setting out the case for war. The same poll showed that only 22 percent believe the administration’s claims that the insurgency is weakening—notably Vice President Dick Cheney’s declaration that the resistance is in its “last throes.” Similarly, more than half the respondents rejected the administration’s assertion that the outcome of the war in Iraq will have a significant impact on the War on Terror.

The results of the most recent CNN/*USA Today*/Gallup poll also conceded bad news for the administration: 61 percent believe that there is no plan to win, 46 percent think that the war has increased the terrorist threat, and 51 percent want the administration to set a firm timetable for withdrawing forces.

Even before Bush’s speech, it was clear that the U.S. is at a critical juncture and that a national debate is heating up. Three key questions need to be answered. First, do the stakes in Iraq warrant the further sacrifice of American blood and treasure? Second, what are our objectives in Iraq, and is there any

realistic strategy that can culminate in an American victory (and what end state in Iraq qualifies as victory)? Third, if the war in Iraq is unwinnable, what are the consequences if U.S. troops are withdrawn?

With these questions looming, Bush spoke to the nation in an attempt to stanch the erosion of the administration’s credibility. Before the speech, analysts generally agreed that the president needed to do two things: to explain the nature of America’s interests, and thus persuade the nation that Iraq matters enough to justify ongoing sacrifice, and to set out a clear strategy for victory. Bush failed badly.

The administration sold the war by arguing that Saddam Hussein possessed WMD and posed a “grave and gathering threat” to America’s security. No longer able to fall back on its original rationalization, the administration suggested that Saddam was in cahoots with al-Qaeda and that Baghdad had helped to orchestrate the 9/11 attacks. But the administration’s alternate reality was authoritatively debunked by the bipartisan 9/11 Commission. That ought to have been the end of it, but in his speech Bush once again trotted out this discredited canard, stating that American troops “are fighting a global war on terror. The war reached our shores on September 11, 2001. ... After September 11, I made a commitment to the American people: This nation will not wait to be attacked

again. We will defend our freedom. We will take the fight to the enemy. Iraq is the latest battlefield in this war.”

In reality, it was the decision to invade Iraq that transformed that country into a front in the War on Terror. Saddam Hussein was responsible for many horrible things, but allowing Iraq to be used as a terrorist haven was not one of them. Our invasion brought jihadist fighters into Iraq. A recent CIA report concluded that Iraq has now become perhaps the most important training ground for Islamic extremists, who will go back to other countries in the Middle East and use the skills they learned in Iraq to topple conservative, reasonably pro-U.S. regimes in places like Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt.

Bush’s plan—if it can be called that—is based on the twin goals of transforming Iraq into a democracy and the “Iraqization” of the war by training Iraqi security forces to “assume the lead in defeating the terrorists and insurgents.” Bush linked reduction of American force levels to an increase in the number of Iraqi forces in the field: “As the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down.”

There are two problems with that strategy. First, it is silly—to be charitable—for Bush to say that it would be unwise to send more American troops

The second problem is that the White House’s assessment of the Iraqi troops is as disconnected from reality as its larger policy. As Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.) discovered on a recent tour of Iraq, only 2,500 to 5,000 Iraqi troops are capable of conducting military operations without the aid of U.S. forces. It will be a long time—if ever—before the Iraqis are ready to take over primary responsibility for quelling the insurgency. Most of the Iraqi forces are poorly motivated, undisciplined, badly led, and under-equipped. Moreover, as the *Los Angeles Times* has reported, their ranks have been infiltrated by insurgent sympathizers. And to operate independently of U.S. forces, the Iraqis need to build up a command-and-control structure and logistics networks. That is a time-consuming task. If the readiness of Iraqi forces is the metric that determines when American forces can come home, substantial numbers will need to remain for a long time.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has admitted that the insurgency could go on for an extended period—“five, six, eight, 10, 12 years”—and that it will not be defeated by American forces. More startlingly, Rumsfeld says that attaining stability and security in Iraq should not determine when U.S. troop

Moreover, precisely by creating instability and insecurity in Iraq, the insurgency prevents the Iraqi government (such as it is) from establishing its political authority in large swaths of the country—and even in Baghdad—or moving ahead with reconstruction. In the parts of Iraq where the insurgency is active, normal life has come to a standstill. Providing order is the most vital function of any government, and in this regard the ongoing insurgency demonstrates the impotence of the Iraqi “democracy.”

Unless the insurgency is defeated and Iraq is stabilized, no Iraqi government will be able to function effectively. And if Americans are unable to defeat the insurgents, why should anyone believe that Iraqi forces will be able to do so?

The administration’s strategy for reducing U.S. forces in Iraq is an open-ended commitment to maintain current troop levels for an indefinite period. Here Bush faces a problem that he did not even acknowledge. Administration officials have implied that by keeping the current number of U.S. forces in Iraq for another couple of years, enough time can be bought to train the Iraqi security forces to defend their country. Even if this were true—and it almost certainly is not—it is very much an open question whether the U.S. can maintain 140,000 troops in Iraq. American ground forces are stretched to the breaking point. Many units are preparing for their third tour of duty. From February through May, the Army has fallen far short of its recruiting goals. (Preliminary figures for June indicate that the Army slightly exceeded its monthly quota. But it still faces a tough climb to attain its 2005 recruiting targets.) There also is anecdotal evidence that an increasing number of junior officers are resigning their commissions at the end of their five-year service commitments and that the Army is also having a hard time retaining NCOs.

WHY WOULD THE ADMINISTRATION **DELEGATE TO IRAQI FORCES** THE TASK OF **DEFENDING THE UNITED STATES** FROM THE **TERRORIST THREAT**?

to Iraq because that “would undermine our strategy of encouraging Iraqi troops to take the lead in this fight” while simultaneously claiming that, for the U.S., the stakes in Iraq could not be higher. If this conflict is pre-eminently an American war, if so much is riding on the outcome, why would the administration delegate to Iraqi forces the task of defending the United States from the terrorist threat?

levels can be reduced: “Success should not be defined as domestic tranquility in Iraq. Other democracies have had to contend with terrorism and insurgencies for years, but they’ve been able to function and eventually succeed.”

This is an extraordinary statement. It contradicts Bush’s claim that America must stay the course in Iraq because the war there is critical to the War on Terror.

The issue of U.S. troop levels in Iraq is important for another reason. There is a very straightforward explanation of why the United States has failed to suppress the insurgency: because of bungled planning from the beginning, there have never been enough troops to prevent Iraq from emerging as a breeding ground for terrorists. U.S. forces are like undermanned fire brigades dashing from one blaze to another. Each time the flames are damped down in one hot spot, the troops move on to deal with another. When American forces shift, the insurgents come back to the hot spots that the troops have vacated. This is why the U.S. has been unable permanently to interdict the flow of jihadist fighters across the Syria-Iraq border or pacify Anbar province—the heartland of the Sunni insurgency—and key cities like Baghdad and Mosul.

There is only one plausible strategy that can lead to victory: dramatically increasing the number of U.S. troops. Given current constraints, however, pursuing victory would require the reinstatement of conscription and a willingness to fight for years to come. This is a reality that the Bush administration is unwilling to face.

The president maintains that by staying the course, “completing the mission,” and showing “resolve,” the United States can win. But in truth, America’s choices are stark. Staying the course means accepting a bloody and indefinite war against the insurgents. That would be counterproductive because, to a great extent, it is the American occupation of Iraq that fuels the insurgency. The alternative is setting an early date for the withdrawal of American forces and sticking to it. Simply put, the only real exit strategy is to exit.

Those who want to stay the course assert that there are three reasons the U.S. should not withdraw: the impact of an early withdrawal on the internal situ-

ation in Iraq, the effect on the regional balance of power in the Persian Gulf, and the implications for America’s reputation and U.S. credibility.

The consequences of an American withdrawal are easily exaggerated. Start with the effect on Iraq’s internal political situation and on the broader administration goal of attaining a “democratic transformation” in the Middle East. Whatever the administration’s manufactured reality, Iraq is not going to become a democracy and the Middle East is going to remain a turbulent region.

IF WASHINGTON REALLY IS SERIOUS ABOUT **BRINGING THE SUNNIS BACK INTO IRAQ’S POLITICAL PROCESS, SETTING A TIMETABLE FOR WITHDRAWING AMERICAN TROOPS IS THE WAY TO DO IT.**

The administration has trumpeted certain events—Saddam’s capture, the transfer of “sovereignty” to the Iraqis, the January elections—as indicators that things would get better quickly in Iraq and that progress was being made in quelling the insurgency. Obviously, these claims have proved false. There is no reason to believe that the drafting of the Iraqi constitution (the Aug. 15 deadline for completing the draft appears likely to slip) and the national referendum on the constitution (supposed to take place in mid-October) will be turning points in the insurgency.

The fact is, Washington is in way over its head in Iraq’s complex political and sectarian/communal dynamics. As Robert McNamara wrote in his memoirs, the gravest U.S. error in Vietnam was getting involved in a country about whose history and political culture American officials were ignorant. In Iraq, the U.S. is being played by groups hungry for power and eager to advance their own agendas. Recent news stories have suggested that some Sunni leaders are urging their community to re-engage

in the political process. But as the *Los Angeles Times* has reported, there are no credible political leaders who can speak authoritatively for the Sunni community as a whole or for the insurgents. There is little reason to believe that the Sunni insurgents will lay down their arms. And why should they, given the fact that the current government policy is to allow Shi’ite and Kurdish militias to continue operations?

Moreover, the insurgency steadfastly has maintained one key political demand: that the U.S. fix an early withdrawal

date. Indeed, it could be argued that if Washington really is serious about bringing the Sunnis back into Iraq’s political process, setting a timetable for withdrawing American troops is the way to do it. On the other hand, the current strategy of trying to negotiate with the insurgents is a risky one: it rewards them for violence while antagonizing the Shi’ites.

In the meantime, the United States is being manipulated by the Shi’ites (and by the Kurds, who are biding their time until they can break away from Iraq and establish an independent state). Their goal is simple: as the demographic majority in Iraq, they want power, and they want to use the American military to defeat the insurgents who stand in their way. In the context of Iraqi domestic politics, U.S. support for the Shi’ites is expedient, but it is very shortsighted because even if Washington somehow manages to establish a stable Iraqi government, it will probably rue the day. A glimpse into the postwar future can be seen in Basra, where the Shi’ites have imposed a regime of harsh Islamic law.

Were the U.S. able to defeat the insurgents and hand Iraq to the Shi'ites, the country would become Basra writ large: a fundamentalist Islamic regime allied with Iran and hostile to long-term U.S. interests.

Of course, it can be argued that if the U.S. leaves too soon, Iraq will be plunged into civil war. One response to this argument is to point to the obvious: large swaths already are engulfed by chaos, and in many respects a civil war already is underway. Even more important, if the U.S. stays and somehow manages to defeat the insurgency, when the Sunnis are vanquished, the postwar Shi'ite government will demand that American forces leave. Once that happens, it is highly probable that Iraq will

capabilities, the U.S. can deter the emergence of an oil hegemon should the strategic situation in the Gulf change. The U.S. can maintain the regional balance in the Gulf without maintaining a highly destabilizing permanent military presence in the area.

The final argument against an early withdrawal is that America's reputation will take a big hit. This is a red herring. Given that the administration has no viable strategy for victory, the U.S. is going to be forced to face the consequences of failure in Iraq. The only question is whether it is sooner or later. Moreover, scholars such as Jonathan Mercer, Ted Hopf, and Daryl Press have demonstrated that in a crisis, other states do not make their assessment of

been killed or maimed, and the Middle East will be even more unstable than it is now. The real fallout of leaving Iraq will be in the realm of American domestic politics.

The administration implicitly knows that Iraq is not going well, and it is trying to shape the inevitable postwar debate about who lost Iraq—laying the groundwork for its own version of the Dolchostoss, the post-World War I myth fabricated by German nationalist extremists that the German army was not defeated in World War I but rather was stabbed in the back by treasonous elements at home. Already administration officials are implying that those who question the wisdom of its strategy are undermining the morale of the troops. The clear implication is that open debate about the Iraq War is unpatriotic. When things end badly in Iraq, the White House will claim that the U.S. could have won but its policy was undermined by domestic critics.

The facts say otherwise. As presidential spokesman Dan Bartlett put it, the administration does not want to “relitigate past decisions.” But the truth remains that the United States is entangled in a strategic quagmire because the president plunged America into an avoidable war and compounded this mistake by bungling its conduct.

Whatever reality the empire-builders create, history's verdict will be harsh. Who lost Iraq? The Bush administration. And that is a reality that their best efforts to create another narrative can never obscure. ■

Christopher Layne is Associate Professor of International Affairs at the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A & M University and a member of the Coalition for a Realistic Foreign Policy. His book, The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy From 1940 to the Present, will be published next spring.

WHEN THINGS **END BADLY IN IRAQ**, THE **WHITE HOUSE** WILL CLAIM THAT THE **U.S. COULD HAVE WON** BUT ITS POLICY WAS **UNDERMINED BY DOMESTIC CRITICS**.

unravel anyway, with the Kurds declaring independence and Shi'ites consolidating their power in southern Iraq—and perhaps inviting the Iranians to help them keep the Sunni threat from rematerializing. Simply put, whether the U.S. leaves soon or “stays the course,” the outcome is going to be messy.

As far as the regional balance of power is concerned, the only real U.S. interest in the Persian Gulf is oil. The overriding American objective is to ensure that none of the Gulf's three main powers—Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran—is able to become an oil hegemon by conquering one of the others and establishing control over the bulk of the region's oil reserves. At present, however, none of the Gulf's big three have the military capabilities to become a hegemon, and, as many scholars of U.S. strategy agree, by acting as an offshore balancer and relying on “over the horizon” military

U.S. credibility and will on the basis of what the United States did in the past. Rather, their judgment is based on the importance of the issue at stake to Washington and on U.S. military capabilities. If the U.S. withdraws from Iraq in the near future, others are not going to make an adverse judgment about America's future credibility. This is doubly true because the United States is committed to pursuing the real War on Terror regardless of what happens in Iraq. Indeed, by freeing up more resources—in particular for Afghanistan, where the Taliban is resurgent—an early American withdrawal would demonstrate that Washington is strongly determined to pursue the War on Terror to victory.

Either now or later, the United States will leave and will have to face the consequences of the administration's reckless policy. The only difference between leaving now and leaving later is that later more American troops will have

Community Centered

New Urbanism promises to make cities liveable again.

By William S. Lind

JUST 50 YEARS AGO, cities such as Cleveland, Detroit, Buffalo, and Philadelphia were splendid places to live, work, and shop. Today, they are mere hulks. The great department stores, Halle's, Higbee's, and Wanamaker's, stand empty. In Detroit, they recently blew one up. Downtown, there is no rush hour anymore. Trash blows in streets populated by beggars and bums. Life has fled to the suburbs and from the public space to the private home.

Peter Brown, a historian of late antiquity, offers a similar description of the ancient city of Hippo Regius when St. Augustine became bishop there in AD 395.

The town had been a *civitas Romana*, a 'city of Roman citizens,' for two hundred years. Roman life had been established on a magnificent scale: there was a theatre to seat some five to six thousand, a great public bath, a classical temple crowning the hill.

Augustine was strategically placed in just that quarter, where the hold of the old public life of Hippo had already weakened. For only a minute's walk away, there were the villas of the rich. These were the private, residential suburbs, overlooking the harbor. For at least a century, no one had spent large sums of money on the public buildings around the forum. ... Instead, great wealth was spent, significantly, indoors, on opulent mosaic floors as rich as oriental carpets ... at a time

when the public finances of the Roman towns were being shaken by repeated economic crises.

Just as the civic life of places such as Hippo was central to the health of the Roman Empire, so living, thriving cities are important to America today. They should be especially important to conservatives. Real conservatives understand that the foundation of our country is not its economy or its politics but its culture, and cities are necessary to culture. Only cities provide the concentrations of wealth and educated people that high culture needs in order to flourish. Art museums, concert halls, symphony orchestras, and theater districts are urban phenomena. So are less formal but equally necessary cultural institutions such as good bookstores, for used as well as new books; public libraries with extensive collections; churches that offer a real High Mass, with music by Palestrina, not Sister Mary with a guitar; series of lectures or small concerts, often devoted to obscure music; and the coffeehouses and salons where people who have ideas may make them subjects of intelligent discussion.

You will not find these things in small towns, nor in suburbia, with few exceptions. Least of all will you find them in America's universities, where the Christian West's cultural patrimony is regarded with loathing and dismissed unheard. Most such places are now little more than culturally Marxist Skinner boxes.

Just as cultural conservatives understand the importance of cities, so they

also understand the importance of aesthetics to cities' revival. The decline of American cities is due to many things, chief among them the export of America's manufacturing jobs. But aesthetics, broadly defined, also played an important role. The traditional American city, still visible in places such as Alexandria, Virginia and Newburyport, Massachusetts, offered a visually pleasing and psychologically comforting place to resident and visitor alike. The City Beautiful movement that arose out of the Columbian Exposition of 1893 introduced a monumental grandeur that enhanced rather than detracted from what was traditional. The neoclassicism of that movement was in turn built upon by the Art Moderne urban architecture of the 1920s and the Art Deco of the '30s.

Then, after World War II, twin disasters struck. The first was International Style architecture, which like modern art and modern music was intended to be alienating. With its iceberg towers of steel and glass, surrounded by "parks" of trees in concrete, it succeeded. Pedestrians scurried away from them as fast as they could and away from the cities they came to dominate.

The second disaster was postwar building codes, which demanded that the places where people live be separated from where they work and where they shop by distances too far to walk. As a result, cities were literally dis-integrated and became something else. We call it "sprawl," and it performs none of the city's traditional cultural functions. Worse, sprawl sucked the city's historic

economic functions, first residence, then shopping, and finally employment out of the urban core, leaving behind shells.

Conservatives should not be surprised when *The Latest Thing* ends up making life worse rather than better. What is surprising is that many conservatives oppose the most promising cure for America's urban ills: the New Urbanism.

New Urbanism is now a widespread movement in architectural and urban-planning circles. It holds an annual meeting, the Congress for the New Urbanism, which I have attended regularly for some years. But it was created and is still largely shaped by the vision of one man, a Cuban-born architect named Andres Duany. His vision is profoundly conservative.

Put simply, Duany realized early in his professional life that the way we used to design cities and towns and the buildings in them in the 18th and 19th centuries was wiser than what we have done since World War II. Traditional practices

simply didn't understand overhangs. So I put big overhangs on my buildings. Then the first hurricane hit. None of the old buildings lost their roofs, but all of mine did. I then realized the old architects understood overhangs very well when you are building in the Virgin Islands."

Duany and others have built their New Urbanism on careful study of what has worked over time. They have considered such matters as the relation of street width to building height. Why? Because if you get that wrong, pedestrians are not comfortable being on the street. No pedestrian traffic means a dead city or neighborhood.

Central to Duany's vision has been not just architectural style—New Urbanism can and does accommodate a variety of styles—but the reintegration of what postwar codes separated: where people live, shop, and work. Ideally, these should all be within walking distance. Not only is that efficient, it creates something cultural conservatives prize highly:

freaks, Levellers, and others on the Left who mistakenly think traditional towns and cities were some sort of permanent Woodstock. Conservatives are understandably leery of that crowd and of what their embrace too often brings: statism.

Statism is in fact a powerful force in the current New Urbanism, as exemplified by places like Portland, Oregon with its "urban growth boundary" and plethora of other restrictive measures. Not only does statist New Urbanism endanger fundamental liberties, including property rights, like most things statist it doesn't work. At a meeting in Washington a couple years ago, Andres Duany said, "On my last trip to Portland, I escaped my Intourist handlers and took a real look at what you find inside their urban growth boundary. What you find is sprawl."

The irony here is that good New Urbanism—and not all New Urbanist/Traditional Neighborhood Design architects are good—does not need the power of the state behind it. It sells very well on its own. When people are shown a good New Urbanist development, whether a greenfield new town or urban infill, they say, "Boy, wouldn't it be great to live here!" In Duany's Kentlands development in Maryland's Montgomery County, outside Washington, houses sell for a premium of \$30,000 to \$40,000 over the same floor space in surrounding sprawl developments.

Far from needing the power of the state to force itself on a reluctant public, New Urbanism's main obstacle is the state, in the form of the codes that mandate sprawl. One developer told me that he had to get 150 variances in order to build one small Traditional Neighborhood Design project.

Here is where conservatives should come in. We can help something conservative, the recovery of traditional cities and towns, by doing something conservative: calling for less government, not more. The demand of New Urbanist

ONE DEVELOPER TOLD ME THAT HE HAD TO GET **150 VARIANCES** IN ORDER TO **BUILD ONE SMALL TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DESIGN PROJECT.**

worked better on every level: aesthetically, economically, and from an efficiency standpoint. (Few uses of time are less efficient than hours-long commutes.) Aesthetics, Duany understood, are important to function; "form follows function" is true only if function is defined broadly, in relation to the whole urban space.

Traditional architects and urban planners were often very good at designing not only for function but for the particular place their building or plan would go. In that regard, Andres likes to tell a story on himself. Early in his career, he recounts, he was hired to design some homes in the Danish Virgin Islands. "I followed the traditional local architecture," he says, "but I realized the old architects

community. Community is good in itself, in terms of the non-material richness it adds to life, but for conservatives it offers something more. Morals are enforced more effectively and less dangerously by the pressures that occur naturally within a genuine community than by the power of the state.

Given New Urbanism's inherent conservatism—seeking to replace a decayed present with a revived past is inherently conservative—it has surprised me that I have usually been the only conservative at the movement's annual congresses. That, I suspect, is part of the reason many conservatives oppose New Urbanism. To its partial detriment, New Urbanism has been embraced too fondly by the eco-

conservatives should be for dual codes. A developer should be allowed to choose either the current sprawl code or a New Urbanist code written to be appropriate for traditional urban and town design. Which would he chose? The market would decide. Where the developer thought the market wanted sprawl, he would build sprawl. Where he believed traditional neighborhood design would sell better, he would build to the New Urbanist/TND code.

Unlike statist New Urbanists, we should have no desire to outlaw sprawl. Sprawling suburbs, with their low densities and large yards, are wonderful places to rear children. Even there, some New Urbanist features—such as sidewalks (many new developments do not have them), stores you can walk to, and rail transit into the city—can be welcome amenities. Sprawl development codes can easily accommodate these features.

But dual codes would lift the present undue burden government places on New Urbanism. A dual-codes policy would facilitate the development of new towns and neighborhoods built to traditional designs, which can be better places to live than sprawling suburbs for people without children. It would avoid the jarring and inefficient growth of urban infill built as if it were low-density suburb, a spreading phenomenon. It would help our cities recover from their present decline while remaining real cities and use private money rather than tax dollars to do so.

More than merely conserving our cities, a conservative New Urbanism, based on dual codes, can restore them as the beautiful, inspiring places they once were and the homes of high culture we need them to be. ■

William S. Lind is director of the Center for Cultural Conservatism at the Free Congress Foundation in Washington, D.C.

Life, Liberty, and a Guaranteed Pension?

When retirement plans fail, taxpayers are called to the rescue.

By Carl F. Horowitz

KLAUS MEYER, a United Airlines employee, wasn't too happy about his company terminating his pension plan. "I call it legalized crime," the 47-year-old Bethlehem, Pennsylvania pilot said. "I lost almost all my United stock value in the bankruptcy and here's another part of the retirement I was promised that is gone."

There are about 120,000 current and future United pensioners in a similarly feisty mood. Some, like retired pilot John Pinto of Annapolis, Maryland are job-hunting, though he doesn't think he will make anything approaching his former salary.

If there is an upside to stories like these, it is that Congress is likely, however belatedly, to make changes in the nation's pension laws before things get this bad or worse at many other major companies.

When UAL Corp. (United's parent company) filed for Chapter 11 in December 2002, it didn't want to be saddled with its large and growing backlog of pension obligations that had contributed heavily to the bankruptcy. Nearly two and a half years later, this May, a federal bankruptcy judge made it official: United had permission to shift its \$9.8 billion in unfunded liabilities to the federal government. The company's voluntary termination of four separate plans was the largest pension collapse in the nation's history, more than double Bethlehem Steel's \$3.9 billion meltdown of a few years ago.

Reneging on pension commitments, grim a business as it is, may be one of United's best hopes for climbing out of Chapter 11. The populist impulse to flip the bird at top company officials is understandable but in the end misplaced. The massive pension shortfall at United and other major employers is the product of a more than 30-year-old operative assumption that government protection against pension collapse is a matter of right for employer and employee alike.

United's guardian angel is a federally chartered entity, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, or PBGC. Created by the 1974 Employee Retirement and Income Security Act, the agency was set up to cover failed employer-sponsored "defined-benefit" plans. These are the old-style annuities that provide retirees with monthly checks. They stand in contrast to the newer and more popular "defined-contribution" retirement instruments, such as 401(k) and profit-sharing plans, where participating employees act as their own investors. PBGC does not get involved in the latter type.

Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. came about after a decade of debate in Congress. Memories of Studebaker were still fresh. After that automaker shut down its South Bend, Indiana assembly plant in 1964, it was able to make good on promised benefits to only 3,600 of its 10,500 workers and retirees. About 4,000 workers in the 40-to-59 age range got a

mere 15 percent, while the remaining 2,900 under 40 got nothing. Lawmakers wanted no encore performances. PBGC would collect a nominal premium from participating employers and in return would assume payments to pensioners for the remainder of their lives in the event the plan could not pay for itself. The agency's workload has grown to the point where it is responsible for covering more than one million current and future pensioners.

Currently, about 31,000 defined-benefit pension plans cover 44 million American workers and retirees, heavily concentrated in unionized industries.

In 1980, nearly 40 percent of the American workforce participated; today that figure is down to about 20 percent—and two-thirds of those are hybrid “cash-balance” plans that mimic defined-contribution plans. That there were nearly 115,000 defined-benefit pension plans in force just 20 years ago is a testament to how much they have

sarily applicable across the board. For plans terminated in 2005, the guaranteed maximum annual pension for persons who retire at age 65 is \$45,613. But the ceiling is set lower for younger ages. Pilots for major commercial carriers, who by law must retire at 60, would collect an annual maximum of \$29,648, a far cry from the \$125,000 a year that some United pilots would have stood to collect had there not been a PBGC takeover.

Pension collapses have put PBGC in a bind. From the start, the agency has derived the bulk of its revenues through employer-paid premiums. But in order to meet all claims, these premiums have to reflect market risk.

The problem is that PBGC doesn't operate in the same way, for example, that car insurers do. The corporation charges each employer the same basic annual premium of \$19 per account, plus (where applicable) a variable-rate premium of 0.9 percent of a plan's unfunded portion. That's a good deal

claims. As of Sept. 30, 2001, PBGC was running a net surplus of \$7.7 billion in its basic single-employer program. One fiscal year later, it was running a \$3.6 billion deficit. That shortfall widened to \$11.2 billion in 2003 and \$23.3 billion in 2004. PBGC last year was tethered to about \$450 billion worth of obligations, a roughly tenfold rise from early in the decade. Among the more than 1,100 plans with at least \$50 million in unfunded liabilities as of last Sept. 30, the combined shortfall was \$353.7 billion. These plans had a combined \$786.8 billion in assets available to cover \$1.14 trillion in liabilities—a “funded ratio” of 69 percent, down from 82.8 percent in 2000.

Forget about United—the whole airline industry is now a hard case. AMR Corp., the parent company of American Airlines, is running a pension deficit of \$2.7 billion, according to Standard & Poor's. Back in 2003, to stave off bankruptcy employees agreed to \$1.8 billion worth of concessions—but with the stipulation that pensions would be protected. Northwest and Delta respectively have pension shortfalls of \$3.8 billion and \$5.3 billion. Their CEOs, Douglas Steenland and Gerald Grinstein, at a Senate Finance Committee hearing this June stated they may have to seek bankruptcy protection and a PBGC takeover unless Congress passes a bill sponsored by Sens. John D. Rockefeller (D-W.Va.) and Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) to create a 25-year extension for airlines.

U.S. Airways Group, which currently is on the verge of a merger with America West, twice has declared bankruptcy this decade, emerging the first time courtesy of a \$1 billion taxpayer-backed loan. PBGC is liable for \$2.3 billion of the \$2.5 billion shortfall in the pension covering more than 50,000 U.S. Airways flight attendants, machinists, and other non-pilot employees. That doesn't even include the more than \$725 million

AS OF SEPT. 30, 2001, THE PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY CORPORATION WAS RUNNING A NET SURPLUS OF \$7.7 BILLION. ONE FISCAL YEAR LATER, IT WAS RUNNING A \$3.6 BILLION DEFICIT. THAT SHORTFALL WIDENED TO \$11.2 BILLION IN 2003 AND \$23.3 BILLION IN 2004.

fallen out of favor relative to defined-contribution alternatives. Still, for 44 million current and future pensioners, the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation is a lifeline in the event the worst happens, since Social Security payments average only 40 percent of a beneficiary's immediate pre-retirement earnings.

As for United's \$9.8 billion shortfall, \$6.6 billion will be the responsibility of PBGC. That's only about two-thirds of the promised amount—and not neces-

sarily higher than the original flat \$1 per-account annual fee. Premiums from the first source brought in around \$600 million last year, while those from the surcharge generated another \$900 million, a figure far higher than normal owing to the recent surge of at-risk plans.

Many members of Congress are reluctant to raise premiums for fear of employer attrition from the system. And indeed, not long ago \$1.5 billion a year in premium-based revenue would have been more than sufficient to cover

PBGC assumed in 2003 when it took over the company's plan for pilots. All of this makes the pension collapses of Eastern and Pan American in the early '90s—\$600 million and \$800 million respectively—seem quaint.

The shaky foundation of airline pension plans, and defined-benefit plans generally, will test the ability of Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. to survive without emergency action. David M. Walker, who heads the Government Accountability Office, doesn't rule out an eventual taxpayer bailout. Current pension law, he said in Senate testimony, "represents the floor of acceptable behavior, not the desired state. Unfortunately, when it comes to pension funding, too many high-risk companies do what is legally permissible—rather than what is right—when deciding how much money to put into their pension plans." Senate Finance Committee Chairman Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) put it more emphatically, "The facts are alarming. ... Another temporary Band-Aid won't do."

These people aren't telling PBGC Executive Director Bradley Belt and other agency officials something they don't already know. PBGC realizes that the pension system is torn between two conflicting goals: preserving agency solvency and fulfilling commitments to all pensioners. Something has to give. If we shore up the system, we have to allow companies more leeway to back out of defined-benefit plans or at least more time to set those plans in order. But if we want to make sure every pensioner is paid in full, Congress either has to raise premiums or enact a one-time taxpayer bailout not unlike the one that saved the savings and loans' bacon back in 1989. To do neither is to risk some of our largest employers going bankrupt because they were locked into unsupportable long-term commitments.

Employers naturally prefer wherever possible to switch from a defined-bene-

fit to a defined-contribution system, or failing that, to a cash-balance plan. By no small coincidence, profitable discount airlines such as Southwest and JetBlue have defined-contribution plans. United Airlines has every reason to join them. At its bankruptcy filing, the company estimated the initial six-year cost

TO POLITICIZE THE EVALUATION OF RISK MEANS TO PLAY FAVORITES; POLITICS, AFTER ALL, IS WHY PREMIUMS ARE NOW SO INSUFFICIENT. FULL PRIVATIZATION OF PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY CORP. MAY BE THE BEST WAY TO GO.

of instituting a 401(k)-type plan at \$700 million, assuming it makes matching contributions of 4 to 6 percent of salary to each employee's account. By contrast, continuing to fund its defined-benefit plan would cost \$4 billion over that period.

The employer bum's rush from defined-benefit plans faces two major obstacles. The first is resistance by the unions. Organized labor has been a prime mover for many of the prohibitively expensive agreements. (The auto industry may be the next to feel pension pain as a result.) The AFL-CIO website defines "real pensions" as the defined-benefit variety. The second impediment is a class-action ruling by a U.S. District Court two years ago in *Cooper v. IBM*, holding that IBM's cash-balance plan illegally discriminated against older employees. Last September the company achieved a provisional out-of-court settlement, though not on age-discrimination grounds.

In the meantime, the defined-benefit system is going to be with us for a long while. And delaying the day of reckoning is not the same as eliminating it. Congress last year passed employer-backed temporary two-year legislation, the Pension Funding Equity Act, whose key feature is a switch in the basis for calculat-

ing pension liabilities from 30-year Treasury bonds to long-term, high-yield corporate bonds. It effectively amounted to an \$80 billion loan from pensioners to employers. Congressmen John Boehner (R-Ohio) and Sam Johnson (R-Texas) have put forth a bill to raise the per-participant annual premium from \$19 to

\$26, require employers to calculate liabilities through the use of a yield curve, and fully fund shortfalls within seven years. The Bush administration has unveiled its own reform plan that would hike the annual premium to \$30 per participant and even higher for those affiliated with the shakiest employers.

These bills are not bad insofar as they spring from a belief that government can be, as the expression would have it, "run like a business." Unfortunately, governments are not businesses. To politicize the evaluation of risk means to play favorites; politics, after all, is why premiums are now so insufficient. Full privatization of Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. may be the best way to go. Let PBGC remain in business, but make it compete on the same footing as other insurers of annuities, unencumbered by pressure to socialize risk. Privatization is never politically painless, but in this case it might be positively benign compared to the prospect of thousands of striking airline pilots in the throes of ground rage. ■

Carl F. Horowitz writes about labor, welfare, housing, and immigration issues. He also edits the biweekly Union Corruption Update, a publication of National Legal and Policy Center.

CONGRESS

Demand That These Practices Stop

The United States of America is the only large country in the world to:

- **Rely on its global competitors to finance its Government and Military:**

99% of the **US Federal Deficit** was purchased by **foreign investors** in 2004. (Source: Federal Reserve Release Z.1, June 9, 2005)

44% of the total **US public Government debt** was held by foreign investors as of May 2005. (Source: US Treasury Department)

- **Allow foreign countries to spend \$620 Million to lobby the Government for free trade, tax incentives, and contracts** in the last several years and permit **47% of federal officials to work for foreign interests** after leaving Government service during the 1980's. (Source: Center for Public Integrity)

- **Concede \$1.3 Trillion of key companies and industries sold** to foreign interests in the last 10 years (8,600 total companies sold during that time).

- **Give incentives to foreign companies** to come to compete predatorily with US industry while receiving subsidies and protection in their home countries.

- **Use one-sided unenforceable free trade policies** that force US companies to outsource or face bankruptcy and results in the largest trade deficits ever recorded (**\$617 Billion of US assets transferred to foreign hands in 2004**, a rate of **\$1.2 Million per minute - and increasing**).

- **Borrow more money from foreign governments and companies to give tax cuts**, much of which is spent immediately on imported goods or goods made by foreign controlled companies operating in the US.

- **Cut taxes and encourage consumer spending while at war** with an under-funded, under-armed, and under-equipped Military, while not addressing the record consumer debt and the lowest personal savings rates since the Great Depression.

- **Have no economic plan** to secure, maintain, and develop domestically owned industry operating for the benefit of America and its people.

We allow ourselves to be **diverted to secondary social issues** that have always divided this country with no reasonable expectation of resolution. This **should not distract us** from securing an **economic and industrial plan to assure our national security and standard of living** in the years to come.

Our priorities should be:

- **Stop acting for special interests & for self serving political reasons that are economically and functionally destructive for the country.**

- **Prevent further industrial collapse, sellout, and bankruptcy of essential US-owned companies.**

- **Eliminate present near-total dependence on foreign lenders, employers, and producers.**

- **Stop all proven failed trade policies that have destroyed US industry (like WTO, NAFTA, & now CAFTA) and caused 30 years of trade deficits, while arming our competitors with \$4.5 Trillion of key US assets during that time.**

- **Prioritize and become instrumental in rebuilding core American owned industry and production.**

Other countries are waging a **planned economic war** by lobbying for free trade and creating inescapable dependencies through Government debt, consumer goods, and employment. They dump cheap subsidized goods, forcing us to outsource or sell out, then use the proceeds to buy our remaining industries and further the cycle. By suppressing our interest rates with Treasury bond purchases they keep us from feeling major pain.

These outright acts of economic aggression against America have gone unaddressed and unchecked for too long. **30 years of trade deficits is enough. Demand representatives restore US economic independence now. Demand our Government once again work for American companies and citizens, not foreign interests.**

Learn more at www.EconomyInCrisis.org.

ECONOMY IN CRISIS
CREATING AWARENESS OF OUR TRUE ECONOMIC CONDITION

Our Afghan Winter

Three years in, Washington hasn't bested Moscow's record.

By Eric S. Margolis

UNTIL THE DOWNING of the military helicopter on June 29, with 17 Americans aboard, the news from Afghanistan was almost all good, according to President George W. Bush and the national media. The Taliban's fanatical minions were atomized by B-52s, just as Dervish hordes were mowed down a century ago by British quick-fire guns at Omdurman. Nests of foul al-Qaeda terrorists were "smoked out," to use the president's Texan argot, their denizens either liquidated or shipped in irons to Guantanamo. Osama bin Laden and his host, the one-eyed Taliban leader Mullah Omar, are still on the lam, but this minor shortcoming, the Pentagon assures, will shortly be corrected.

Thanks to enlightened American tutelage, democracy has flowered in Afghanistan under amiable CIA asset and now president Hamid Karzai. Islamic medievalism was uprooted, women were liberated from the *burka*, children schooled. The lethal riptide of Islamic fundamentalism was reversed. Accordingly, and with much fanfare, victory was declared in the Hindu Kush and Bush's great caravan of freedom moved on.

To triumphalist neocons, Afghanistan is a prime example of what America's freedom warriors can achieve and a model for the "liberation" of other benighted Islamic nations. Just as a century earlier Britain's imperial soldiers brought the light of Christian civilization to Asian and African darkness, so today selfless American GI's have brought blessings of freedom to misguided Muslims.

Alas, none of this is true. News coming from Afghanistan is almost entirely concocted by Pentagon spokesmen and faithfully parroted by the obedience-trained U.S. media. The Taliban was not destroyed. Faced with overwhelming military odds, Mullah Omar ordered his men to blend back into civilian life or take to the mountains in traditional Afghan style. Talibs simply replaced their trademark black turbans with white ones.

Mullah Omar promised his followers the American *farangi* would tire of occupying Afghanistan and, like all previous invaders, one day depart. Then, he promised, the faithful would come down from the mountains and smite the remaining infidels and their traitorous Afghan henchmen.

In recent months, the Taliban and fighters from other anti-American nationalist groups, notably the Hizbi Islami of former *mujahedin* guerrilla chieftain Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, have mounted increasingly effective attacks on the 19,000 U.S. troops occupying Afghanistan.

In a piquant irony, nearly three years after invading Afghanistan, the U.S. finds itself in much the same predicament as the Soviets three years after their 1979 invasion. The Soviets easily occupied Afghanistan and installed a puppet ruler. Local tribal chiefs were bribed to be good.

But 36 months later, the Soviets controlled only the main cities and major roads. The rest of the country was firmly in the hands of what the Soviets called

"Islamic terrorists"—local tribesmen who grew increasingly aggressive as the occupation wore on. Local imams began preaching *jihad* against the infidel. Bribery bought the Soviets only a semblance of loyalty. Meanwhile, the Afghan Communist Party secret police, KhAD, inflicted the most abominable cruelties and tortures on suspected opponents, murdering over 20,000.

In 1985, the Soviets held a rigged national assembly, or *loya jirga*, that installed as president KGB asset Mohammad Najibullah. In 2004, CIA asset Karzai was installed in a U.S.-run *loya jirga*.

Unable to control Afghanistan, the Soviets held national elections in 1986 and 1987 that included opposition parties. The U.S.-run 2004 Afghan election, ballyhooed by the White House and media as Afghanistan's first election, was even more rigged and just as preordained as the earlier Soviet version.

The Karzai regime is kept in power only by the bayonets of U.S. and NATO troops. Embarrassingly, over 200 American bodyguards protect Karzai from his own people. His writ extends only to the capital's suburbs, hence his sobriquet, Mayor of Kabul.

Behind the cardboard Karzai cutout, real power is held by the Northern Alliance, composed of chiefs of the old Afghan Communist Party and KhAD secret police. These Tajik and Uzbek chieftains dominate the nation's opium-poppy trade and maintain close links to Russia's intelligence services and military.

The United States thus finds itself allied to Communists, against whom it waged war two decades ago, whose leaders are both class-A war criminals and major drug dealers.

Keeping 19,000 troops in Afghanistan, and a ring of bases in the region to support them, costs Washington between \$1.5 and \$2 billion monthly and ties down units badly needed in Iraq and North Asia.

These troops are stuck in Afghanistan. Efforts to “Vietnamize” the war by creating a local Sepoy army have failed miserably. Those Afghan tribal chiefs and soldiers serving the American occupation do so for money and are thus inherently unmartial, unreliable, and often treacherous. Every U.S. military operation is telegraphed well in advance to anti-American forces. In Afghanistan, links of blood and tribe are even more important than money.

Worse, its hostile takeover of Afghanistan has left the United States the proud owner of a nation producing 91 percent of the world’s supply of heroin. The Taliban, according to the United Nations’ own drug agency, eliminated 90 percent

because of oil geopolitics. The Taliban received \$40 million in aid from Washington as late as May 2001—four months before 9/11. There were two reasons: one, the Central Intelligence Agency was considering using the Taliban and other Islamic resistance groups in Afghanistan as handy weapons against China and Russia in Central Asia, and two, the U.S. needed a compliant regime in Kabul to assure the planned pipeline south from Termez, Uzbekistan to Karachi. Today, the U.S. is building a constellation of permanent bases across Pakistan and Central Asia, including three major ones in Afghanistan, to guard the pipeline and advance American hegemony over the region.

But each step deeper into Afghanistan creates new foes for America. The alleged al-Qaeda terrorist training camps in Afghanistan against which the Pentagon keeps fulminating actually had little to do with Osama bin Laden and his 300 followers.

Roughly 60 percent of jihadis in Afghanistan in late 2001 were being trained by ISI, Pakistan’s intelligence service, to fight in Indian-controlled

declared terrorists. At Israel’s behest, Palestinian resistance groups were also added to the black list. As a result, these Islamic and nationalist movements were transformed into enemies of the United States. The many thousands of Muslims who trained in these camps became hunted terrorists and, of course, anti-American.

In another irony, Iraq is fast becoming what Afghanistan was in the 1980s: a magnet and incubator for Islamic militants and a cause célèbre for young Muslims throughout the world.

When the United States invaded Afghanistan in October 2001, this writer and other old Afghan hands urged our countrymen to attack al-Qaeda quickly, then get out. Otherwise, the U.S. risked getting sucked into a permanent, debilitating occupation of that xenophobic nation. “Easy to invade, exceptionally difficult to leave,” I wrote.

Difficult indeed. If U.S. troops depart, the Karzai regime will be quickly swept away by the Taliban and other anti-American nationalist forces. Russia and its proxies, the Northern Alliance, will also join the fray.

Since a reliable Afghan mercenary army cannot be fielded, U.S. troops must stay on. The isolated regime in Kabul, composed mostly of minority Tajiks and Uzbeks, will have to be propped up and financed indefinitely against the hostile majority Pashtuns. Collapse of the Karzai regime would be seen as a triumph for anti-U.S. Islamic forces, most notably Osama bin Laden.

But Afghan history shows the longer an occupier stays on, the fiercer local opposition becomes. A widening of Islamic resistance would threaten to draw the U.S. into neighboring Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and, most ominously, Pakistan.

We saw this kind of disastrous mission creep before in Indochina. Already dangerously overextended U.S. armed

ITS HOSTILE **TAKEOVER OF AFGHANISTAN** HAS LEFT THE **UNITED STATES** THE PROUD OWNER OF A NATION PRODUCING **91 PERCENT** OF THE **WORLD’S SUPPLY OF HEROIN**.

of Afghanistan’s poppy crop. The U.S.-backed Northern Alliance restored the illicit trade as soon as it seized Kabul and now dominates it. The Afghan economy runs on money from the drug trade, in which all of the warlords and the Karzai regime are involved. Just as opium was the local currency in the wars in Indochina, and cocaine in Central America, so heroin is the plasma that keeps Afghanistan alive.

At the same time, the U.S. is getting ever more deeply involved in Afghanistan

Kashmir. Some 25 percent came from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, dedicated to overturning brutal Communist dictatorships in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Smaller groups came from China’s Sinkiang (formerly Eastern Turkestan), the southern Philippines, and a handful from Chechnya. These jihadis were not necessarily anti-American; they were as much “freedom fighters” as our old allies, the Afghan *mujahedin* of the 1980s.

However, when the U.S. invaded Afghanistan, all these groups were

forces cannot afford to enlarge their operations in Central and South Asia, which is fast becoming a cockpit of rivalry between China, India, Pakistan, and Russia.

What to do? Enter into talks with the Taliban and other Afghan nationalist groups. Cut loose the Karzai regime and work to forge a genuine national consensus through an honest *loya jirga*. Then pull all U.S. forces out of Afghanistan and let its people sort out their own problems in their traditional manner.

Hyper-macho Republicans who never served in their nation's armed forces warn that "cutting and running" from Afghanistan or Iraq is a mortal sin that will "undermine U.S. credibility." Nonsense. The U.S. cut and ran from Vietnam. Three decades later, just about everyone believes ending that lost war was worth the humiliation of an Italian-style retreat. U.S. credibility went up, not down.

Good generals know when to retreat. Politicians rarely do. Afghanistan is not worth the life of one more American soldier.

In the political sense, the U.S. has already lost the war there since it cannot impose its strategic will on that nation without bayonets and billions of dollars. The U.S. cannot even define what victory in Afghanistan means.

But even if Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar are finally found—and that is the main mission of U.S. occupation forces in Afghanistan—America may already be too deeply involved to withdraw. Long after bin Laden and Mullah Omar are gone, U.S. forces may still be guarding the Khyber Pass to make it safe for truckloads of opium and morphine base heading south to Karachi. ■

Eric S. Margolis is the author of War at the Top of the World: The Struggle for Afghanistan and Asia, and a columnist, commentator, and war correspondent.

Property Wrongs

Thanks to the Supreme Court's *Kelo* decision, your home is no longer your castle.

By Steven Anderson

THOSE WHO PLAY the numbers call it "a dollar and a dream." With the decision last month in *Kelo v. New London*, the U.S. Supreme Court created a new land lottery for any government allied to a well-heeled developer with a dollar and a scheme.

The *Kelo* case involves eminent domain—the government's ability to remove an owner from his property. It is one of the most awesome powers the government has at its disposal. Called the "despotic power" by the court in its very earliest days, other than the ability to end life and incarcerate, there is nothing more menacing the government can do.

Eminent domain is a power of the sovereign not owing its existence to any of the enumerated provisions of the Constitution. That doesn't mean, however, that the Constitution is irrelevant. The Takings Clause of the Fifth Amendment serves as a substantive restriction on eminent domain; unfortunately, it is now a restriction that's missing its muscle.

Kelo put the issue of eminent-domain abuse before the court in the clearest possible terms: does the U.S. Constitution allow the government to take property from one private party in order to give it to another private party because the new owner might produce more profit and more tax revenue for the city? In this case, Susette Kelo and six other families faced eviction and the destruction of their homes to make way for a

private development including a luxury hotel and high-end condos that the city hopes will generate more jobs and taxes.

The plain language of the Takings Clause and all constitutional jurisprudence impose two requirements for the application of eminent domain: public use and just compensation. *Kelo* exclusively involved the first requirement. There are innumerable issues with compensation, but as a practical matter, an inquiry into the nature of just compensation occurs only where the use is deemed public.

In an opinion long on consequences but short on logic, the court held that the mere possibility of economic development or increased tax revenue is a public use under the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution.

With very few exceptions, until the middle of the 20th century, public use meant things the public actually used—roads, schools, and post offices. In *Berman v. Parker*, in response to an urban-renewal scheme in Washington, D.C., the court made a subtle but significant change in the language of the Takings Clause, ruling that the removal of blight was a public "purpose." (The theory of urban blight shares intellectual parentage with the same progressive movement that gave us eugenics.) The court, in an opinion that has outlasted in years its length in pages, also declared that courts were obliged to acquiesce to legislative definitions of public use.

Thirty years later, the court reiterated its deferential approach to the interpretation of a fundamental constitutional provision in *Hawaii Housing Authority v. Midkiff*, a case that removed Hawaii's land oligopoly, the remnants of which were a holdover from the state's feudal past. In state courts, pure economic development was first pronounced a public use by the Michigan Supreme Court in the infamous *Poletown* case, whose rationale spread swiftly across the country and remains good law in several states today, even though last year the Michigan court unanimously reversed its earlier decision.

These three cases served to embolden governments and developers alike, relegating the Takings Clause to a mere speed bump in an otherwise unencumbered race to redevelop. As a result, governments more and more began to take land merely because it could conceivably make more money as something else—effectively doing what the Takings Clause prohibits, transferring property from one private owner to another. Until *Kelo*, the U.S. Supreme Court had never considered a public-use

most Supreme Court cases affect a small portion of the population, under *Kelo* literally every home and small-business owner's property is now up for grabs, for sale to anyone with a penny and a plan.

After giving considerably less than lip service to the well-settled notion that the government cannot use eminent domain to transfer property from A to B, the court expressly allowed just that. A city's "hope" for "projected" jobs and increased tax revenue excuses the confiscation of any home, business, or church, regardless of whether those anticipated benefits ever materialize. The majority justified this position by emphasizing that Connecticut said the use was constitutional, necessitating an indiscriminating deference to the state legislature. In addition, the court declared that states are free to protect property owners, as evidenced by New London's "carefully considered" plan with plenty of promises.

The fundamental blunder of the majority is its underlying theory of constitutional interpretation—revision is probably a better word—where deeply

government—or as in *Kelo*, from its private, unelected redevelopment agency—confirms the court's complete detachment from reality.

Allowing the state or any local legislative body to determine public use imperils property owners and enfeebles the Constitution. As Justice O'Connor, who ironically penned the *Midkiff* opinion, points out in her *Kelo* dissent, "were the political branches the sole arbiters of the public-private distinction, the Public Use Clause would amount to little more than hortatory fluff." The courts owe absolutely no deference to the legislature on this question; the definition of public use has always been made by judges. This role, sadly, has been abdicated by the majority, compounding the mistakes made in both *Berman* and *Midkiff*. Justice Thomas highlights this in his dissent, noting that such deference is absent in judicial decisions regarding other constitutionally guaranteed rights.

The import is clear. Government not only has the power to take your home, it has the power to decide if it has the power to take your home. By shirking its historically mandated role to review the constitutional propriety of legislative action, the court provides no effective restraint on the government's ability to use eminent domain.

The majority also seems oddly comforted by the fact that New London had a plan. While the allegedly elaborate steps the city had to follow in order to condemn property may serve to soothe an insulated majority's concern over the shady nature of local redevelopment, it alarms everyone who lives in the real world.

Redevelopment is already corrupt. It's no wonder, then, that the Institute for Justice found more than 10,000 actual or threatened condemnations for private use across the country between 1998 and 2002. An entire industry of condem-

A CITY'S "HOPE" FOR "PROJECTED" JOBS AND INCREASED TAX REVENUE EXCUSES THE CONFISCATION OF ANY HOME, BUSINESS, OR CHURCH, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THOSE ANTICIPATED BENEFITS EVER MATERIALIZE.

case involving pure economic development—and the decision suggests that the majority still hasn't much considered it.

Kelo, the most significant property-rights case in half a century, asked whether the mere possibility that property could be put to a better economic use constituted a public use under the Takings Clause. In a narrow majority opinion, the court altered the nature of private property in this country. While

meaningful provisions that have "proved to be impractical given the diverse and always evolving needs of society" are to be disregarded, or in the case of the Public Use Clause, written out of the text of Constitution completely. The majority's first point—that it must defer to a state's deliberative body on the meaning of the federal Constitution—borders on lunacy. Its second, that state laws requiring some type of plan protect property owners from an overreaching

nation attorneys, planners, consultants, developers, and bond dealers has significant financial incentives to push governments to condemn more and more land. Armed with grand titles, fancy conceptual drawings, and often unattainable promises of more jobs and tax revenue, this industry exists solely to prompt government to steal land for private profit—a motive now sanctioned by this court.

It is naïve for the court to believe that a “plan” offers any protection for private property owners. No development has ever occurred without one. No developer has ever arrived in a neighborhood to announce, “Today I’ll build my office park. Oh, and I just came up with this idea yesterday.” Because of this, no American property owner should feel secure.

Surely, governments and developers do have to do something in order to push a redevelopment plan through. But it’s not an “elaborate procedural process,” as Justice Kennedy suggests. Rather, it’s a relatively simple process, one that developers are alarmingly efficient in navigating, but the public is not—to their detriment. City officials lie to their constituents, stonewalling individuals who seek records of the conversations between the government and developers and other development documents through FOIA requests. The “legitimate public debate” is a sham since the deal is generally signed behind closed doors before the project is even announced. Governments recite by rote that eminent domain will be used as a “last resort” despite that fact that the mere mention of eminent domain makes it the tactic of choice. (Also telling is that, without exception, every government uses this phrase when speaking about the power.) The majority, in reciting that land in New London was “successfully negotiated” with “willing sellers,” failed to understand that

negotiation under threat of government force is no negotiation at all. New London’s own attorney admitted in his oral argument that many of the sellers were persuaded to do so because they would lose their homes anyway.

And the “stricter” state laws, typically blight statutes, that the court believes will serve to shield home and small-busi-

ARMED WITH OFTEN UNATTAINABLE PROMISES OF MORE JOBS AND TAX REVENUE, THIS INDUSTRY EXISTS SOLELY TO PROMPT GOVERNMENT TO STEAL LAND FOR PRIVATE PROFIT—A MOTIVE NOW SANCTIONED BY THIS COURT.

ness owners from the covetous hand of government are already being abused. Originally designed to allow government to remove dilapidated and vermin-infested slums, blight statutes have mutated into a meaningless collection of words. Today, blight means a neighborhood has too many owners or too many older homes. The statutes are so vague they apply to any property, essentially making them equal to the economic development statute in *Kelo*, just with a different name.

The seriousness of this decision is not subject to hyperbole. Now that the simple chance that the confiscation of property will increase tax revenue or jobs comports with the Public Use Clause, literally every property in this country is up for grabs. Any home can make more money as a luxury condominium, and any small business can turn more revenue as big-box store. Middle- and working-class Americans, those who are not politically connected, are especially susceptible to the abuse of eminent domain by the unholy alliance of tax-hungry government and land-hungry developers.

As pointed out in the briefs supporting our clients, every church, every VFW, and every Moose Lodge may be

taken because they pay no taxes at all. Minorities and the elderly will be—and already have been—disproportionately affected by the government’s role as land baron.

Kelo marked a sad day for the country. States are certainly free to enact protective legislation, as the majority points out, but the decision is not about

the rights of the states to govern their citizens but the essential character of the document upon which all our rights are based, rights that are inalienable and not subject to the faddish whim of the legislature. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court completely renounced its role, allowing the government to decide the rules by which it plays while giving it free rein to acquire other people’s property.

It’s not a game—but we all lost. ■

Steven Anderson is the coordinator of the Castle Coalition at the Institute for Justice, which argued Susette Kelo’s case. In the wake of the decision, it launched the Hands Off My Home Campaign, an aggressive initiative giving ordinary citizens the means to protect their homes from government-forced takings for private development.

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Free Trade's Human Toll

CAFTA is no bargain for Central America's impoverished laborers.

By James Gass

"MY EYES HAVE SEEN what no human eyes should see," said the oldest man in the Guatemalan village of Santa María Tzejá. He's a remnant of the 10 million people who in pre-Columbian days possessed the New World's greatest empire, spanning southern Mexico and northern Nicaragua. Since then tribalism, Conquistadors, the United Fruit Company, dictators and death squads, and Castro's insurgents, along with earthquakes and hurricanes, have ruined their world. The illusions of the modern era and the hands of Mother Nature and man have torn apart the nations of the proposed Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). Indeed, the people of this region have witnessed far too much.

CAFTA is the latest acronym attached to the United States' ongoing quest for cheap labor. Its provisions call for extending the doctrines of NAFTA, its failing cousin, across the countries of Central America—with likely the same result.

In the 21st century, when trade negotiators talk about multilateral agreements, tariff reductions, and accessing new markets, they really mean the Third World (and its children) laboring for a dollar or less an hour. And CAFTA isn't even an end in itself; it is but another building block for the larger Free Trade Area of the Americas that would include the workers in 34 economies from North America, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. The architects of this utopia occupy themselves by jetting between economic conferences. But a view from the ground reveals that these

nations bring little to the partnership apart from the sweat of their impoverished populations.

Except for the tourist resorts, Central America is a volatile part of the world, whose plight is exacerbated by unstable governments that plunder their countries' natural resources. With rich soil, it is increasingly vulnerable to widespread deforestation. Its rainforests, "the lungs of the planet," are fast losing ground to sugar cane, rubber plantations, and cattle ranches. In 1950, 60 percent of Central America was rainforest. Today, half of those trees have been wiped out. In El Salvador, a nation still reeling from major hurricanes in 1998 and 2001 and slash-and-burn practices, 90 percent of the original forests are gone. For centuries, these woodlands were peoples' homes. Now they are grazing lands for McDonalds and their billions served.

The population of 46.8 million living in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic is slightly larger than the combined number of Texans and New Yorkers. Economic researchers have noted that together these six aspiring CAFTA countries have a GDP of \$85 billion, while in contrast, the city of New Haven, Connecticut has a GDP of \$80 billion. Approximately 60 percent of Central Americans live in poverty. Honduras, the most underdeveloped nation in Latin America, suffers from what one scholar has called, "the four 70s: 70 percent illiteracy, illegitimacy, avoidable deaths, and rural status."

U.S. State Department statistics reveal that in Central America, agriculture accounts for approximately 45 percent of employment. The staple crops and products are coffee, sugar, corn, flowers, and fruit. Throughout much of the 20th century, a significant portion of El Salvador's national income originated from coffee. Today, workers on larger coffee farms are often exposed to agricultural chemicals and have limited access to health-care. According to UNICEF, approximately 60 percent of Salvadorans in rural areas cannot get safe drinking water. Further, since 2000, the per pound price of coffee has dropped from \$2.40 to 50 cents. As a result, an estimated 600,000 small-scale farming jobs have been lost in Central America, and 90,000 jobs have fled from El Salvador alone.

In Central America, over 35 percent of the population is under the age of 14, and child labor is endemic to both the coffee and sugar-cane industries. In CAFTA's fantasy kingdom, the daily diet is tortillas, red beans, rice, and eggs, although the 2002 World Food Report indicates that one in four Central Americans suffers from hunger. The floors of workers' one-room adobe or concrete-block houses are earthen, and the roofs are made of tin or thatch. In farming areas along the Caribbean coast, people work as subsistence farmers or on larger agribusiness estates. The "big three," Chiquita, Dole, and Del Monte, account for approximately 70 percent of the world's banana exports, and bananas constitute approximately 40 percent of Central America's fruit exports.

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By suppressing American colonial manufacturing, Britain attempts to suppress American independence

The American revolutionaries almost lost the War of Independence because they did not have the manufacturing capacity to produce the arms they required. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Great Britain had prohibited its American colonists from manufacturing virtually any type of good for either their own use or export.

The deprivations caused by a lack of war supplies seared into the minds of the American revolutionaries the need for a strong domestic manufacturing base. Never again, swore George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, Henry Knox and a generation of other leaders, would the U.S. be dependent on others for the necessities required for its national defense.

Creating a strong industrial base was top priority for newly independent United States

When George Washington became President in 1789, his top priority was to create a strong U.S. industrial base. Early on, he commissioned Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton to devise a set of policies that could help the nation industrialize. The result was Hamilton's now famous, Report of Manufactures, issued in December 1791.

America responds to British attempts to cripple American industry through cheap imports

Under the American System, the United States forfeited the quick consumer benefits from cheap imports. Instead, the nation took a longer view. It promoted domestic investment over personal consumption. Simultaneously, America allowed the import of foreign products for those willing and able to pay the tariff, ensuring consumer choice.

Robert G. Ingersoll, a prominent 19th century politician and orator, captured the thinking of that era as follows:

"It is better for Americans to purchase from Americans, even if the things purchased cost more. If we purchase a ton of steel rails from England for twenty dollars, then we have the rails and England the money. But, if we buy a ton of steel rails from an American for twenty-five dollars, then America has both the rails and the money."

The American System was U.S. trade policy from 1816 until 1933, the midst of the Great Depression. During that 117-year period, America had transformed itself from a handful of sparsely populated colonies on the East Coast, where 95 percent of the people lived on the farm, into the world's richest, most powerful, most technologically advanced industrial nation.

Trade moves from a highly valued hallmark of US economic health to a giveaway concession in foreign policy negotiations

Reciprocal tariff reductions were the hallmark of U.S. trade policy until the late 1960s, when the United States negotiated the Kennedy Round of global trade negotiations. In those talks, the United States began to reduce tariffs in exchange for foreign policy and other concessions, such as military bases, and alliances in Cold War.

Trade concessions became a favored foreign policy tool. In quick succession, the Japanese negotiated policy concessions that allowed its electronics cartel to destroy the U.S. electronics industry. In the 1970s and 1980s, the U.S. destroyed its textile and apparel industries by granting other nations special quotas in exchange for their global political support. In the 1991 Iraqi war, the U.S. gave Turkey apparel quotas worth 20,000 U.S. jobs per year. In 2002, Turkey asked for even more concessions, plus \$30 billion worth of aid to allow U.S. troops to cross its border and enter Iraq from the North. Hundreds of similar examples exist today...

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Workers' lives on multinational fruit plantations are severe. They labor for 12 hours per day, and often seven days a week, while upwards of 70 percent of these peasants are on 90-day contracts and move from plantation to plantation. In addition, without the proper safety clothing and rubber gloves, these migrant workers get covered in toxic pesticides and fungicides used for disinfecting fruit. As late as the 1980s and early 1990s, over 10,000 Costa Rican banana workers were sterilized due to exposure to the lethal nematicide DBCP.

Not surprisingly, violence, alcoholism, drug addiction, disease, prostitution, and crime flourish in the workers' crowded plantation barracks. According to United Nations figures, the average minimum wage in Central America, assuming one can earn that, is approximately \$30 per week, or \$1,560 per year.

Textiles are another key industry for Central America. This is a business supported by the *maquila* factory workers in the dozens of Free-Trade Zones (FTZs) in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Honduras. Established in the 1980s and 1990s as gated free-trade communities for neo-slave labor, these work zones are a microcosm of CAFTA's proposed future. The products that these workers make are the clothing that we all wear. A National Guardsman from New England who is familiar with these work zones in San Salvador revealed, "You open the door and it smells like sweat and plastic and 60 or 80 women are sitting at sewing machines making fleece jackets or assembling vulcanized rubber boots." He continued, "The air is full of fluff, they have no safety guards on the machines, and they make \$5.30 a day for 13 to 15 hours of work—it's astounding."

The Zona Franca Las Mercedes in Managua is the main FTZ in Nicaragua, housing approximately 20 garment factories and employing 5,500 workers. Eighty percent are women, 85 percent

are under the age of 26, and 70 percent are single mothers with an average of four children. These female workers make clothes for export to retail superstores, including Target, Sears, J.C. Penney, and Wal-Mart. In addition to the lint clouds, the workers at Las Mercedes earn between \$3 and \$5 (based on productivity and speed) for a 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. work day. Typically, each worker sews and assembles 400 pairs of blue jeans each day—far more at back-to-school time. Multinational companies in CAFTA's prospective republics openly state they prefer teenage girls for factory work: they have greater dexterity and are considered more docile workers.

In November 2003, some high school students in Vermont got a closer look at what CAFTA's impact might be on Central American workers when a trio of female workers from the San Miguel FTZ in Honduras visited schools. Through an interpreter, a 19-year old *maquila* worker, Lydda Gonzalez, told the students, "We work under terrible conditions...The factory is hot, so we sweat...there is dust in the air that we're breathing all day. We sit on hard, wooden benches and at the end of the day, we're in a lot of pain." According to the news article that covered Lydda's visit to the U.S., she reported, "supervisors constantly screamed at her" and berated workers so that they would "work faster." In addition, these *maquila* workers were "permitted only two bathroom breaks per day in a bathroom without toilet paper or soap" and "forced to work unpaid overtime to meet quotas." At the San Miguel FTZ, some workers were fired for trying to unionize against the factory's conditions. This, unfortunately, is an all too common experience for workers throughout Central America. According to the AFL-CIO, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica outlaw unions from par-

ticipating in collective bargaining, labor strikes are illegal, and workers have essentially no rights.

The weak governments of Central America are infamous for their history of fiscal instability, insolvency, and what Theodore Roosevelt termed "chronic wrongdoing." CAFTA will reduce trade tariffs by 80 percent and phase out the rest over 10 years, which will further undermine these governments' financial steadiness and their already uneven application of the rule of law.

A wide variety of often divergent groups has rejected the CAFTA proposal, for different reasons. Organized labor, the U.S. Business and Industry Council, Human Rights Watch, U.S. textile and agricultural groups, Oxfam, and Catholic Relief Services have joined forces to oppose it. Clearly, their concerns were already well established by the hard facts of the CAFTA labor environment. In late June 2005, however, the Associated Press reported that for over a year the U.S. Labor Department had actually suppressed several government-commissioned studies that highlighted the deplorable working conditions and human-rights abuses of the prospective CAFTA countries. That news did not dissuade the Senate from passing CAFTA by a vote of 54-45 at the end of June.

"[T]he race to the bottom is the race to the top," author Ted Fishman noted. Within that race, the workers from the proposed CAFTA nations may in fact start too high. China's 1.3 billion people, who labor for 25 cents per hour, have already vanquished NAFTA and CAFTA's projected workers, who earn four times too much. For all considered, CAFTA's passage would be just one more unbearable sight. ■

James Gass writes from the Boston area.

Leaving No Child Left Behind

States charged with implementing Bush's national education plan balk at the cost of compliance.

By W. James Antle III

GEORGE W. BUSH may go down in history as a war president, but like his father he also envisions himself as an education president. Conservative columnist George Will, pointing out that under Bush the Department of Education's budget has grown faster than defense expenditures, recently wrote, "Had 9/11 not happened, Bush's administration might be defined primarily by its education policy, particularly the No Child Left Behind law." And as state educators increasingly revolt, the Republican Party's education policy ceases to be defined primarily by its commitment to local control.

When No Child Left Behind (NCLB) first passed, it appeared to be a political masterstroke. It stands as one of Bush's few genuinely bipartisan domestic-policy achievements, clearing the House by a 381 to 41 margin with more Democratic than Republican votes. Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) partnered with the White House to steer it through the Senate. The measure promised liberals increased spending and focus on minority-student achievement; it offered conservatives enhanced school choice and tougher standards. By the 2002 midterm elections, some polls found that Republicans had virtually erased the Democrats' traditional advantage on education issues.

It was the political equivalent of the lion lying down with the lamb, but it didn't last for long. Conservatives soon balked at NCLB's exorbitant price tag

and federal meddling. Far from being a "universal voucherization program," as one popular Republican blogger described it, the measure offered only very limited public-school choice. Liberals were outraged that it did not cost more, accusing the Bush administration of failing to live up to its commitment to fund the law fully. Senator Kennedy complained, "The tragedy is that these long overdue reforms are finally in place, but the funds are not."

But the biggest challenge to NCLB comes from outside Washington, as state legislatures and education officials resist federal requirements they say they cannot afford. The issue doesn't fit neatly into the normal red-blue lines. Utah gave Bush 72 percent of its vote in 2004, his highest margin in any state. In April, the Republican-controlled legislature voted to assign a higher priority to

sive and that taxpayers "won't learn anything new about our schools by giving these extra tests." Many parents seem to agree. According to the *Washington Post*, "You go, girl," is a representative response.

One of Sternberg's supporters is Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, who is moving toward a lawsuit challenging the federal requirement that students be tested annually between grades three and eight and also in 10th grade. State auditors claim this is an unfunded mandate that will cost Connecticut \$8 million more than it is receiving from Washington. Many local school boards have passed resolutions in favor of the potential suit. The Connecticut Association of School Superintendents also backs the attorney general. In late June, the state legislature closed ranks behind Blumenthal,

STATE LEGISLATURES AND EDUCATION OFFICIALS RESIST FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS THEY SAY THEY CANNOT AFFORD.

the state's accountability laws than NCLB; the Republican governor signed the bill, putting at risk Utah's \$76 million in federal education funding. The lower house of the New Jersey legislature recently passed a similar bill.

Connecticut Education Commissioner Betty Sternberg was an early and vocal opponent of NCLB, arguing that its testing requirements are too expen-

sive and that taxpayers "won't learn anything new about our schools by giving these extra tests." Many parents seem to agree. According to the *Washington Post*, "You go, girl," is a representative response.

In all, officials in more than 40 states have proposed significant changes to the implementation of NCLB. The National Education Association (NEA) and three states are already fighting it in court. A standard complaint against

the federal Education Department has long been that it makes some 50 percent of the rules but provides less than 7 percent of national education spending. NCLB was intended to use that 7 percent as leverage to get the states to abide by more rules still. The law creates new proficiency goals and requires regular testing to show results. Schools that are judged to be failing—i.e., leaving children behind—first receive additional funding but

average, inflating the state's black-white performance gap.

The rebellion against NCLB has created some unlikely voices for states' rights. As early as the 2004 presidential campaign, Howard Dean was deploring the idea of distant bureaucrats—along with politicians like Bush and House Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-Texas)—dictating how states run their schools. The debates in the Connecticut and New Jersey legislatures saw

But Spellings's angry comments belie her department's strategy of co-opting and accommodating NCLB critics through waivers and other inducements. Illinois was granted a waiver that allowed it to count fewer students' test scores toward its goals. School districts in the state will now have to have 45 special-education students in order for the federal government to monitor them as a subgroup under the law; last year it was just 40. This seemingly minor change cut the number of special-needs subgroups in Illinois from 535 to 394, relaxing standards for many districts.

This means that state resistance may elicit greater federal flexibility, but not seriously jeopardize NCLB. Marie Gryphon, an education policy analyst for the Cato Institute, worries "that the state rebellion against NCLB will end with a whimper, not a bang."

"In Utah and elsewhere, waivers and backroom deals will replace the letter of the law and defuse the crisis," Gryphon says. "In the end, I think No Child Left Behind will become just one more expensive federal program that does not do what it was supposed to do."

Jack Jennings, president of the Center on Education Policy, points out that state legislation opting out of NCLB is still largely symbolic. Only when local principals and superintendents act under these laws by specifically refusing to do things mandated by NCLB will there be an impact—and this will likely be followed by bureaucratic negotiations and court wrangling. This takes time, and NCLB will be up for reauthorization in 2007.

Much will depend on the endurance and intensity of public opposition to NCLB. In the 1990s, the Clinton administration tried to head off congressional Republicans' welfare-reform bills by having the Department of Health and Human Services grant waivers to reform-minded governors.

IN AN INTERVIEW WITH PBS'S "NEWSHOUR," SPELLINGS SAID IT WAS "UN-AMERICAN" FOR CONNECTICUT TO TOLERATE ITS ACHIEVEMENT GAPS BETWEEN WHITE AND MINORITY STUDENTS.

then are subjected to progressively stiffer penalties if they continue to miss their legal targets.

Not only must states strive toward the proficiency of all students by 2014, they must also provide data showing that designated subgroups of students—mainly minorities, students from low-income families, and the disabled—are making adequate progress. This subgroup category has contributed heavily to the controversy.

In Utah, for instance, Hispanic students test three years behind whites in the same grades. NCLB requires the state to work toward closing this achievement gap or be found leaving Utah's Hispanics behind. Standardized test scores revealed comparable discrepancies between Connecticut's black and white students.

But Connecticut education officials retort that the law doesn't take into consideration the state's demographics. Connecticut is a mainly affluent state dotted with troubled urban areas. Sternberg and others point out that the predominantly white suburban school districts perform above the national

Democrats railing against unfunded mandates and federal encroachments, while many Republicans rose to defend their president's program.

The Bush administration has deployed Education Secretary Margaret Spellings, a former White House aide close to the president, to quell the grassroots revolt. Yet her strenuous defense of NCLB has often inflamed angry feelings rather than calmed them. She has compared recalcitrant education officials to children who need to be disciplined. In an interview with PBS's "NewsHour," Spellings said it was "un-American" for Connecticut to tolerate its achievement gaps between white and minority students.

The Department of Education's motion to have the NEA's lawsuit dismissed also contains some strong wording. The response says the suit is "no more than the use of a federal forum to proclaim an advocacy group's belief that states and school districts should be receiving more federal funds" and argues that "[s]uch advocacy is not an appropriate use of the federal courts."

This approach ultimately failed because the public was willing to go further.

It's not clear that NCLB is as unpopular as unreformed welfare was in the 1990s, but in some quarters it has become a lightning rod for complaints about everything that is wrong with education—even things that have little to do with the policies it mandates. Educators cite anecdotes of parents who falsely believed it mandated social promotion. After all, they reasoned, students must be promoted to the next grade level regardless of performance if the law says they can't be "left behind."

More informed observers say much of the opposition comes from educators themselves. Jennings notes that NCLB didn't originate within the teaching profession and major educational organizations like the NEA had little role in its formulation. Thus, educators don't feel they have a stake in the reform measure.

But they could have a role in the approaching reauthorization debate. What might they ask for? "The basic problem with the law is that the accountability provisions aren't subtle," says Jennings. "It doesn't recognize relative problems." Education-policy experts say the challenge is to preserve accountability while offering flexibility.

For some who object to an expanded federal role in education, this is little cause for optimism. "When NCLB comes up for reauthorization, it will be amended to legitimize the Department of Education's new 'flexible' approach to accountability," argues Gryphon. "This will mean that federal regulators will have a lot of discretion to set and revise standards."

As state policymakers ponder their options—comply with the Bush administration's education dictates, strike a deal with Margaret Spellings, or sue—grumbling about NCLB is sure to continue. Only time will tell whether it actually leads states to leave behind their dependence on federal funds. ■

In Washington it is hardly a secret that the same people in and around the administration who brought you Iraq are preparing to do the same for Iran.

The Pentagon, acting under instructions from Vice President Dick Cheney's office, has tasked the United States Strategic Command (STRATCOM) with drawing up a contingency plan to be employed in response to another 9/11-type terrorist attack on the United States. The plan includes a large-scale air assault on Iran employing both conventional and tactical nuclear weapons. Within Iran there are more than 450 major strategic targets, including numerous suspected nuclear-weapons-program development sites. Many of the targets are hardened or are deep underground and could not be taken out by conventional weapons, hence the nuclear option. As in the case of Iraq, the response is not conditional on Iran actually being involved in the act of terrorism directed against the United States. Several senior Air Force officers involved in the planning are reportedly appalled at the implications of what they are doing—that Iran is being set up for an unprovoked nuclear attack—but no one is prepared to damage his career by posing any objections.



A CIA internal review of the agency's performance prior to 9/11 is harshly critical

of former CIA Director George Tenet, former Director of Operations James Pavitt, and the former chief of the Counterterrorist Center, Cofer Black, for not doing everything possible to confront terrorism. Pavitt, who was reluctant to take on risky missions against bin Laden encouraged by the National Security Council during the second term of President Bill Clinton, is particularly criticized. The report, completed by CIA Inspector General John Helgeson, is especially acerbic regarding the failure of the agency to stop two of the 9/11 hijackers, Nawaf al-Hazmi and Khalid al-Mihdhar, as they entered the United States. Black did not share information on the two men with the FBI agents assigned to the Counterterrorist Center at the CIA and also turned down a request for a formal memorandum to be sent to FBI Headquarters. The report will be finalized and given to Congress after those criticized in it add their own comments. Pavitt, as head of the Operations Directorate, has publicly accepted full responsibility for the agency's failure, but Black has not acknowledged any deficiencies in his performance. Tenet has not yet responded.



There is increasing evidence that the Iraqi police forces, now under Shi'ite control, are carrying out systematic revenge killings against Sunnis in Baghdad.

The bodies now showing up at the morgue have obvious signs of handcuffing and blindfolding and evidence of being tortured before death. U.S. sources indicate that the suspicious killings have reached the rate of almost 700 per month. The police are supervised by the Shi'ite-run Ministry of Interior, which claims that the killings are being carried out by insurgents wearing stolen police uniforms. But American intelligence sources disagree, noting that many of the killers appear to be actual policemen carrying the expensive standard-issue Glock automatics and driving official Toyota Land Cruisers.

Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is a partner in Cannistraro Associates.

Arts & Letters

FILM

[*Broken Flowers & The Beautiful Country*]

In the Name of the Father

By Steve Sailer

IN THIS AGE of family break-up, the theme of separated fathers and sons underlies the summer's sci-fi popcorn movies, such as "War of the Worlds," "Batman Begins," and "Revenge of the Sith." It also drives two of the season's quieter releases for grown-ups, "Broken Flowers" with Bill Murray and "The Beautiful Country" with Nick Nolte.

In "Broken Flowers," which opens August 5, veteran minimalist auteur Jim Jarmusch has his most commercially promising film. With 1984's "Stranger Than Paradise," Jarmusch began making glacially paced exercises in sensory deprivation that bored you into the giggles. The highlight of "Stranger" was watching two dullards on a midwinter visit to Cleveland try, and fail, to figure out something to do. Go look at the frozen Lake Erie? Their lapses into hopeless silence lowered your resistance enough that when Eddie eventually dredged up the suggestion that maybe they could take in a Cavaliers NBA game, and Willie scornfully replied "The Cavs? They're like one and fifty!" just by contrast this dialogue seemed almost as brilliant as Captain Renault's "Round up the usual suspects" at the climax of "Casablanca."

"Broken Flowers," though, has a more elaborate and conventional plot. Murray plays an aging and depressive Don Juan named Don Johnston, whose latest girlfriend leaves him because he's uninterested in marriage and children, and, frankly, a bit of a blank. But then Murray receives an anonymous letter on pink stationery from an old flame revealing that after they broke up in the 1980s she bore his son, and the young man has now gone on the road in search of his father. Murray's neighbor, best friend, and complete opposite, an enthusiastic Ethiopian immigrant (Jeffrey Wright) with five kids, talks Murray into tracking down his four ex-girlfriends from that era. Whichever woman likes pink, his buddy theorizes, must have written the letter.

Murray first reunites with lovely Sharon Stone, who explains of her late racecar-driver husband, "And then Donnie exploded in a ball of flames." Less hospitable is the daunting Jessica Lange, now a prosperous "animal communicator." But the four encounters prove inconclusive—all the women like pink. (Hey, they're girls.) So Murray returns home, wistfully wondering whether each young man he passes is the son he hopes will give his life meaning.

Teaming Jarmusch with Murray, America's great minimalist movie star, must have seemed ideal. Yet the pairing is a little too perfect, making "Broken Flowers" the Jarmusch movie for people who hate Jarmusch movies. At this point in his career, the melancholy Murray barely has to do anything—he merely hints at one of his famous facial expressions and we mentally fill in the blank for him. Murray's stasis is so watchable that Jarmusch's trademark tedium never quite kicks in, making "Broken Flowers"

more entertaining but less amusing than "Stranger Than Paradise."

Likewise, Murray seems better suited to play the still center in a three-ring circus like "Lost in Translation" than in a slower tempo film like this.

Opening July 8, "The Beautiful Country" is indeed a beautifully filmed story about the Vietnamese son of an American G.I. Because he's Amerasian, everyone in Vietnam mistreats him; they think he's ugly. You'll have to take that on faith, however, because the director (who is, oddly enough, Norwegian) couldn't find a Eurasian actor. The pure Vietnamese fellow he hired, Damien Nguyen, looks like all the other Vietnamese who are scorning him for his mixed features. "Colorblind casting" might work in theater, but in film you have to get race right, especially when your movie is about heredity.

The hero sells himself into indentured servitude to pay for a hellish freighter voyage to New York's Chinatown. Eventually he escapes and hitchhikes to Texas. There he gets a job as a handyman on a cattle ranch alongside his father, Nick Nolte, who is blind from his war wounds.

The masculine pathos of the final scenes is moving. After a lifetime of racist ostracism, the son is pleased to find that he shares the DNA of this magnificent wreck of a man. And when the father finally figures out who this fellow with the Vietnamese accent actually is, he's glad his son has come halfway around the world to work with him. Of course, being real men in cowboy country, the two don't ever mention any of this to each other. Their contented taciturnity makes for a memorable ending. ■

Both are rated R.

BOOKS

[*Sandstorm: Policy Failure in the Middle East*, Leon Hadar, Palgrave Macmillan, 196 pages]

Middle East Paradigm Shift

By Andrew J. Bacevich

In *Sandstorm*, Leon Hadar, a foreign-policy analyst at the Cato Institute, launches a frontal assault on the several orthodoxies constituting the citadel of U.S. policy in the Middle East. If in the end his effort to demolish that fortress does not quite succeed, he breaches the ramparts in several places. *Sandstorm* does not fully persuade, but it is a brave, thoughtful, and vigorously argued book on a subject of critical importance.

Hadar's chief purpose is to discredit what he calls the Middle East Paradigm, to which virtually the entire American foreign-policy establishment subscribes as if to holy writ. Evolving in the immediate aftermath of World War II, the MEP consists of three propositions asserted by supposed "experts" with such frequency and conviction as to take on the appearance of revealed truth. According to Hadar, none of the three can withstand close scrutiny.

The first proposition is strategic, an insistence that the U.S. is called upon to play a pre-eminent role in the Middle East. In a Cold War context, pre-eminence implied using American power to keep the Soviets from muscling into the region. But even during the Cold War, considerations unrelated to the Soviet threat influenced U.S. policy. Specifically, from 1945 onward, Washington was intent on displacing the Europeans whose imperial machinations had created the modern Middle East in the first place.

Indeed, from the outset, nudging the Europeans out was at least as important as preventing the Soviets from horning in. Seen in this context, the pivot around which U.S. grand strategy turned was not the showdown of October 1973 that saw Richard Nixon risking war against the Soviets on behalf of a beleaguered Israel. For Hadar, the key event occurred much earlier, during the Suez crisis of 1956 when Dwight D. Eisenhower humiliated France and Great Britain for presuming that they, in concert with Israel, could act independently in pursuit of their own interests.

Hadar concedes the necessity of U.S. exertions aimed at frustrating Soviet designs on the Middle East. He regrets the fact that the demise of the Soviet threat only fueled U.S. ambitions in the region. Once the Cold War ended, American policymakers were no longer satisfied with mere "leadership." The aim now became unambiguous hegemony. However much George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush may differ in terms of technique, all three share a commitment to the idea that in the Middle East Washington needs to call the shots—a notion fostering a penchant for meddling and adventurism that has cost the United States dearly

need for Persian Gulf oil. He is on far stronger grounds, however, in arguing that the self-interest of oil-exporting nations guarantees the flow of oil far more effectively than does the presence of U.S. military garrisons.

Furthermore, even in crass terms, he finds that the effort to convert the Persian Gulf into a U.S. military protectorate has proven to be a bad bargain. Cheap oil purchased at the cost of many tens of billions of taxpayer dollars—not to mention the lost lives of American soldiers—turns out to be not really very cheap after all. Hadar rightly argues that the region's sheiks, emirs, and presidents-for-life—not to mention free-riding Europeans and Japanese—have been snookering us.

So too, in a sense, have successive Israeli governments. Israel is central to the final component defining the MEP. This third proposition, according to Hadar, is a moral one, reflecting America's commitment to ensuring the survival and security of the Jewish state.

Hadar does not question that commitment. He does question some the consequences to which the commitment has given rise. One has been to provide Israel with enormous political leverage in Washington, permitting, for example, Israeli governments to defy

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while providing little of substance in return.

The second proposition defining the MEP is economic—the belief that Western access to Middle Eastern oil is critical to American prosperity and that only a powerful U.S. presence in the region can assure that access. Few readers will find persuasive Hadar's contention that the United States, drawing the bulk of its energy requirements from sources in the Western Hemisphere, has no particular

successive U.S. administrations on the issue of settlements and to do so with impunity. A second consequence has been to foster the belief that it is incumbent upon the United States to "do something" to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. From Kissinger to Clinton (and now Condoleezza Rice), this has encouraged all manner of political grandstanding but has produced few results other than sticking the United States with the bill for the never-ending

"peace process." From Hadar's perspective, all of this frenetic American activism—from Madrid to Oslo, from Mitchell to Tenet—has only ended up reducing the incentives for Israeli and Arab leaders to engage in serious dialogue.

For at least three reasons, according to Hadar, devising an alternative to the MEP is becoming an increasingly urgent priority. First, as 9/11 and its aftermath have made plain, the American imperial project in the Middle East has already exacted costs far in excess of those predicted by its supporters. The further pursuit of hegemony in the region is an invitation to bankruptcy. Second, although the Bush administration has added "a Wilsonian soundtrack to the old realpolitik-oriented script," foisting democracy on the region will likely drive up those costs still further. Rather than voting into office candidates sympathetic to Jeffersonian values, Islamists are much more likely to choose as leaders radicals committed to jihad. Third, the imperial project is putting us on a collision course with Europe, which is hankering, in Hadar's view, to avenge itself for Suez and innumerable other slights. "Americans and Europeans," he writes, "are being driven into a geo-strategic and geo-economic confrontation over the Middle East." In the near future, a "Berlin-Paris-London triumvirate" might emerge to challenge Washington.

However logical, even necessary according to the dictates of realist theory, this prospect appears highly unlikely. Although the French and Dutch rejection of the proposed European Constitution occurred after Hadar finished his book, that setback only affirms what was already self-evident: the EU is politically (and therefore militarily) feeble and is likely to remain so for the indefinite future. Europe can check the United States by obliging us to foot the bill for our own misadventures—as it is doing with regard to Iraq. But it is unlikely to muster the clout to balance the United States in a classic sense. The fecklessness of our own foreign-policy

elite poses a greater danger to American well-being than does the prospect of a resurgent Europe.

Despite its manifest defects, the MEP persists in large part because, according to the conventional wisdom, no viable alternative exists. Nonsense, says Hadar, offering a policy of "constructive disengagement" as one such alternative. In a nutshell, he advocates allowing regional powers to negotiate their own equilibrium, with Europe serving as the ultimate guarantor of stability. He also wants to take a hands-off approach to the Palestinian issue, expecting that Israelis and Palestinians alike might become more serious about hammering out a settlement. Somewhat improbably, Hadar—who at one point wisely describes the Middle East as "a graveyard of great expectations"—foresees this approach paving the way for NAFTA-like trade agreements inducing "a movement toward democracy in the entire Levant" and an Israeli-Palestinian confederation akin to "a Middle Eastern Switzerland," among other happy arrangements.

Don't count on it. In a region where, as Hadar observes, "unintended consequences are the name of the game," disengagement is no more likely to yield utopia than is the militarized hyper-engagement of the Bush administration.

Lower expectations, a lower profile, lower costs, less dependence, and patience in encouraging the peoples of the region to solve their own problems: these should be the watchwords guiding U.S. policy toward the Middle East—all the while keeping our powder dry. We can't afford to disengage any more than we can afford to remake the region in our own image. Prudence lies in striking a course somewhere between these two extremes. ■

Andrew J. Bacevich is professor of international relations at Boston University and the author, most recently, of The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War.

[Conservatism and Southern Intellectuals, 1789-1861: Liberty, Tradition, and the Good Society, Adam L. Tate, University of Missouri Press, 402 pages]

Liberty and Order in the Slave Society

By Daniel McCarthy

ADAM TATE begins his study of antebellum Southern conservatives with a short but incisive discussion of what conservatism means in a country born of revolution and without a feudal past. This is well-worn territory, but Tate's treatment is, if not entirely original, certainly perceptive. He rejects the 20th-century liberal line that held the South to be, in the words of Louis Hartz, "an alien child in a liberal family, tortured and confused, driven to a fantasy life." Instead, Tate argues, "the United States could be both conservative and radical, in an eighteenth-century sense, at the same time." The several conservatisms of the South, seeking to cultivate tradition in a new land and safeguard liberty in a slave-owning society, are special instances of this quintessentially American paradox.

Conservatism and Southern Intellectuals examines three pairs of Southern intellectuals: John Randolph of Roanoke and John Taylor of Caroline, Virginians both and more Jeffersonian than Jefferson himself; the Southern nationalists and literary men Nathaniel Beverly Tucker and William Gilmore Simms; and, from the Hamiltonian side of the Southern psyche, the Whig humorists Joseph Glover Baldwin and Johnson Jones Hooper. Except for Randolph and perhaps Taylor, these men and their ideas remain largely unknown beyond the academy. Tate's work is above all a contribution to scholarship, yet it is accessible enough to introduce

the layman to these important and problematic figures. The varieties of conservatism here—and Tate pays careful notice to the distinctions both between and among the three pairs—are a neglected chapter of America's intellectual history.

Politically, as Tate shows, there was little to separate Randolph from Taylor. Together they represented the "Principles of '98," the states' rights doctrines of the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, and they stood athwart any measure that smacked of political centralization. They were as *laissez faire* in their political philosophy, both in economics and in their view of state's proper role in society, as any American statesman has ever been. Tariffs, internal improvements, the Bank of America, and militarism were anathema to these Old Republicans, whose principles Randolph summarized as "love of peace, hatred of offensive war, jealousy of the state governments toward the general government; a dread of standing armies; a loathing of public debts, taxes, and excises; tenderness for the liberty of the citizen; jealousy, Argus-eyed jealousy of the patronage of the President." He and Taylor had been early supporters of Jefferson, but his second administration disappointed them sorely. Randolph in particular came to see the Republic as already in decline, subverted by the ambitions of the executive.

Taylor and Randolph were not so similar in their social philosophies. Taylor, an agrarian who "viewed happiness as possession of family, farm, and leisure," had no great love for organized religion, social hierarchy, and other such traditional institutions. Randolph, by contrast, was deeply influenced in his ideas of community and culture by Edmund Burke and the writers of the Augustan Age of English letters. As Tate puts it, "Randolph's social vision was not one of provincialism"—let alone of Taylor's individualism—"but of humanism and civilized discourse in the Western tradition." Both men had reservations about Western expansion, but for different reasons: Randolph believed westward migration

would uproot Southern communities, while Taylor thought the West was (in Tate's words) "heavily subsidized by the government and capitalist interests." As for slavery, Taylor simply thought blacks incapable of liberty. Randolph, who professed to be a friend to blacks, nevertheless defended slavery as ideally a kind of benevolent paternalism. In a letter to Andrew Jackson, he claimed he would never treat his slaves as roughly as the U.S. Navy treated its sailors—"In seven years the same quantity of punishment would not be distributed among the same number of slaves as was inflicted in a voyage of three weeks from Hampton Roads to Portsmouth."

Yet fatefully, as a congressman Randolph became one of the first politicians—if not, as Henry Adams thought, the very first—to tie slavery to states' rights in an appeal to Southern interests. He hoped to use slavery's popularity to resuscitate flagging support for the Principles of '98 and to make the case that the South had much to lose by going to

Southern nationalism. Retaining many of the decentralist principles and much of the rhetoric of the Old Republicans, Simms and Tucker hardened in their support for secession and slavery. The peculiar institution that Taylor and Randolph had acknowledged, however reluctantly, as an evil, Simms and Tucker defended as a positive good.

For all that, Tate shows that the conservatism of Tucker and Simms was not merely window dressing for their proslavery views. On the contrary, following Eugene Genovese, Tate argues that these antebellum intellectuals perceived in slavery an alternative to the creation of an urban proletariat of the sort that existed in Europe and threatened revolution throughout the mid-19th century. "They provided vigorous defenses of slavery and argued that the institution benefited southern society by excluding European working class radicalism," he writes. Tucker and Simms, no less than Randolph and Taylor, were concerned with "how southerners could

AS A CONGRESSMAN **RANDOLPH** BECAME ONE OF THE **FIRST POLITICIANS**—IF NOT, AS HENRY ADAMS THOUGHT, THE VERY FIRST—TO **TIE SLAVERY TO STATES' RIGHTS** IN AN APPEAL TO **SOUTHERN INTERESTS**.

war with Britain in 1812. Randolph failed: the South supported the war anyway, enthusiastically, and there was no renaissance of Jeffersonian decentralism. But the line of argument he pioneered soon took on a life of its own.

Nathaniel Beverley Tucker was Randolph's half-brother and his successor in more ways than one. He inherited Randolph's slaves as well as his hatred of consolidated power. But Tucker's political career was not nearly as distinguished as his kinsman's, and he found greater success—and happiness—as a novelist and a professor of law at the College of William and Mary. Tate pairs him with William Gilmore Simms, a South Carolina native who became the old South's most prolific man of letters, as representatives of a turn toward

create a society that respected both tradition and liberty without threatening either." They saw slavery as a means toward that end.

Secession also became a means toward that end for Tucker and Simms, and they lent their literary talents to the task of constructing a Southern national consciousness. Simms put it plainly: "My novels aim at something more than the story. I am really, though indirectly, revising history." He wrote to a friend, "A national history, preserved by a national poet, becomes, in fact, a national religion." Tucker, for his part, "had been an advocate of secession for most of his adult career," according to Tate, and in 1836 published a successful novel, *The Partisan Leader*, in which a Southern confederacy arises to resist

the tariffs of President Martin Van Buren. But it was not economics driving Tucker's secessionist inclinations, rather it was his belief that under Jackson and Van Buren, if not earlier, the old confederated Republic had died, replaced by a unitary state too large to love. As he wrote to Congressman William Porcher Miles, "it is in small communities only, that the love of country is found to grow, with the intensity of those passions, which account life as worthless, in comparison with the honor of a wife, the purity of a daughter, or even a wanton's whim."

Tate's final set of subjects, the Whig humorists Joseph Glover Baldwin and Johnson Jones Hooper, shared the sectionalist sympathies of Simms and Tucker but had a broader political philosophy quite different from those of the other intellectuals covered in this book. Baldwin and Hooper took their cues from Hamilton and Henry Clay rather than Jefferson and John Randolph, though they shared with the others a dislike for Andrew Jackson.

("He found a confederacy—he left an empire," wrote Baldwin.) Their Whiggism was more ideological than partisan: like the Old Republicans and their successors, Hooper and Baldwin distrusted political parties, feeling that they led to dissension and disregard for the common good. But they supported economic policies that had been repugnant to Taylor and Randolph: internal improvements, protective tariffs, a larger army and navy to protect commerce, and the Bank of the United States.

tive philosophy behind this lampooning and the more genteel humor of Baldwin. Hooper and Baldwin criticized the failures of traditional authorities on the frontier so as to dramatize the conflict they perceived between unbounded freedom and needed order.

"The West created a conceptual problem for conservatives," according to Tate. "Traditional institutions, Burke contended, not only ordered human affairs but also protected the individual from direct influence of the government. Traditional institutions thus preserved

BALDWIN AND HOOPER TOOK THEIR CUES FROM HAMILTON AND HENRY CLAY RATHER THAN JEFFERSON AND JOHN RANDOLPH.

Baldwin and Hooper differed in style as well. Their satirical flair contrasts strikingly—and favorably, it must be said—to the loftier rhetoric of Tucker and Simms, if not Randolph himself. The synopsis Tate provides of Hooper's stories, in particular those recounting the schemes and misadventures of the fictional Captain Simon Suggs, almost by themselves justify the cost of the book. Many of these tales were drawn from Hooper's own experiences—as a census official in Alabama, for example:

Hooper encounters Mrs. Naron, who named her young son Thomas Jefferson. The toddler, when Hooper met him, did not wear any pants or diaper and soon urinated on the floor. Hooper relates that Mrs. Naron called to her son but he 'did not heed the invitation, but continued to dabble and splash in a little pool of water, which had somehow got there, as proud, apparently, of his *sans-culottism*, as ever his illustrious namesake could have been of his.'

Jefferson, Jackson, religious revivalists, and Captain Suggs's parents are just a few figures of authority and piety that serve as objects for Hooper's ridicule. But Tate finds that there is a conserva-

freedom. Baldwin agreed with Burke, but he noted that America, particularly in the West, had very few organic traditional institutions to defend." To preserve liberty and establish a viable social order, these satirists first set about exposing the old institutions that were not up to the task: "Baldwin and Hooper inverted the ideas of Edmund Burke."

Whether their efforts can rightly be called conservative is a matter of debate. The six intellectuals surveyed by Tate subscribed to widely divergent ideas of community and the good society, even while they held certain political principles in common. Tate set himself a difficult task in attempting to connect men with views as disparate as John Randolph's and Johnson Jones Hooper's—linking them closely enough that they can be said to have a shared political philosophy, while leaving their differences stark enough to illustrate the intellectual diversity of Southern conservatism. Yet Tate largely succeeds. *Conservatism and Southern Intellectuals* is a thought-provoking and carefully argued work that, even when it fails to persuade in all its particulars, never fails to put compelling questions before the reader. That, and the service Tate has rendered in bringing these obscure figures to light, makes the book well worthwhile. ■

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[*A Matter of Opinion*, Victor S. Navasky, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 458 pages]

Works Without Faith Are Dead

By Chilton Williamson Jr.

VICTOR NAVASKY is perfectly clear about what *The Nation*, the magazine he has edited for nearly 30 years, is against: “injustice ... the despoliation of the world’s resources ... the arbitrary exercise of power ... prejudice and discrimination ... [the fate of] the dispossessed.” Having read his memoir, I am equally enlightened regarding what Mr. Navasky, personally, is for: the First Amendment, the Rosenbergs, the First Amendment, Alger Hiss, the ACLU (most of the time), the First Amendment, world organization, the First Amendment, the First Amendment...

And I can now assert with confidence what Navasky the man believes: principally, that the journal of opinion has at the heart of its mission the maintenance of “the discursive character of public communication” (Habermas’s phrase), and that its foremost responsibility is, quite simply, to tell the truth. A magazine editor and writer myself since the 1970s, I can only applaud these sentiments. As to what Victor Navasky believes in, however, I have no notion at all. This may be connected with the fact that Mr. Navasky is a man of the Left, and that the Left (so far as I can tell) doesn’t believe in anything, either, and never has.

By “belief in” I mean metaphysical belief, which for me, personally, denotes religious belief. I have read for years, and had it explained to me for almost as long, that the metaphysical world is not necessarily identical with the religious one. While I admit to being unable to conceive how this could possibly be so, I am supposing, for present purposes, that they are identical, if only so as not to seem to insist on creedal religion as the sole mode of transcendental under-

standing. Still, at the heart of the matter lies that thing called faith, which Mr. Navasky appears to lack at every level of his belief system, and of his being. Here is one of a number of examples of this, perhaps the most dramatic in his book.

While *The Nation*, as Navasky duly notes, has printed pieces over the years arguing both for and against the innocence of Alger Hiss, the magazine can fairly be said to be, overall, for Hiss. “For” in this context carries no very precise meaning, but then neither does Navasky’s “defense” of the man, with whom he had a slight acquaintance, in his memoir. Navasky concedes that he has always doubted Hiss’s denial that he had ever known anyone “by the name of Whittaker Chambers,” and that the defendant’s inspection of Chambers’s teeth as a means of ascertaining that this was indeed the man he had known as “George Crosley” strikes him as “some sort of snobbish game” on the part of a patrician “confident that this ne’er-do-well ‘dead-beat’ ... could never bring him down with false charges.” Navasky’s chief reason for doubting Chambers’s testimony regarding Hiss is, he says, his belief that Chambers was a man incapable of distinguishing between fantasy and reality, and therefore one whose word was not to be trusted. Fair enough. In an earlier passage, however, Navasky has candidly stated what Hiss really meant for him.

The Hiss case had always seemed to me the quintessential Cold War episode. Technically the issue was whether the former high-ranking State Department official ... was lying in 1948, when he denied Whittaker Chambers’s charge that he was a member of the Communist Party and a spy; but to me the Hiss case symbolically had come to stand for more than the innocence or guilt of one man. As Chambers himself had written in his best-selling 1952 memoir, *Witness*, “The case stands for the whole [Communist] penetration of government.” Senator Joseph McCarthy, Richard Nixon, and others had seized on

the Hiss case to tarnish the entire New Deal, and Nixon had used it to jump-start his career.

Yes, but what of the guilt of the one man—or, more importantly for Hiss, his innocence? It has been said that the frame-up of Alger Hiss was—and is—an article of faith on the American Left. But faith in what? In the instance of Victor Navasky, certainly not in Alger Hiss. “Perhaps I am wrong about the Hiss case,” Navasky concedes. But how can he be wrong, having carefully avoided stating a conclusion one way or the other? It is, indeed, hard to feel that Navasky cares about Hiss as a dedicated Communist, a victim of miscarriage of justice, or even as a human being, at all. “But I am certain I am right,” he adds triumphantly, “that the mystifications surrounding the subject of espionage, compounded by the emotional legacy of the Cold War, has [sic] interfered with a reasoned assessment of the evidence”—evidence suggesting more broadly that there was an internal Red menace afoot in those days that justified the curtailment of civil liberties in the United States.

Denial of such a menace is indeed, for Victor Navasky, an article of faith. But what kind of faith is this? It is, really, not even politics, rightly understood, but an adumbration of the cultural counter-mythology that achieved incoherent form, a decade or so later, as the flower-children’s New Left. (Myth is grounded in the reality of which it is the imaginative expression, not the reverse.)

Proudly, Navasky quotes from a *Nation* editorial dated June 18, 1908. “There is no force so potent in politics as a moral issue. Politicians may scorn it, ambitious men may despise it or fight shy of it, newspapers may caricature or misrepresent it; but it has a way of confounding the plans of those who pride themselves on their astuteness and rendering powerless the most formidable ... party or boss.” Here again we have incantation substituting for political philosophy. What exactly distinguishes a moral issue from a non-moral one? The phrase “moral issues” is a catchall, ignor-

ing the truth that not all moral issues are equal—that, in fact, some moral issues are not really issues at all. What standard ought we to employ to discriminate between real and bogus ones?

Certainly not the counter-mythological one. Is economic inequality an issue, or is it a fact of life? The answer seems to be that it deserves to be an issue if it can be shown to be an injustice. G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc could have explained why extreme financial inequality is unjust, relying upon an ages-old moral and philosophical tradition to make their case. What explanation can *The Nation* offer, beyond protesting that inequality is “unfair?” So with the depletion of resources. Considered from the non-philosophical point of view, depleting natural resources is what biological entities do naturally in order to sustain life. Viewed otherwise—as a Christian, say, or a Buddhist might view the matter—depletion of resources amounts to the willful or careless destruction of God’s creation or of so much sacred stuff. That indeed amounts to a “moral issue,” in contrast to a scientific description of a biological process.

Absence of a philosophical basis deprives *A Matter of Opinion* of the slightest degree of thoughtfulness and introspection, leaving a gaping hole—458 pages wide, to be exact—to be filled with

unsparingly detailed accounts of doing deals, raising money, lunch-going, dinner-going, club-hopping, celebrity-visiting, institutional gossip, and the like. Some of the anecdotal material (by no means all of it) might have been redeemed by a briefer, more deft, and better-shaped treatment. This, however, would have required, if not a novelist’s, then at least a storyteller’s skill in developing a scene, and Navasky is neither novelist nor storyteller but rather, as he describes himself, a practicing ideologist.

That explains a lot, of course, including the book’s nearly total lack of humor, despite its wealth of wisecracks, clearly mistaken by the author for witticisms. But who ever accused the Left of having a sense of humor? Indeed, one of the few real witticisms to be found in *A Matter of Opinion* is attributable not to Victor Navasky but to William F. Buckley Jr., almost the only colleague of his acquaintance Navasky seems genuinely to despise. After Mr. Buckley announced his candidacy for mayor of New York City in 1965, the editors of *Monocle*—the magazine Navasky had founded while still a student at Yale Law School—invited him to make an appearance at their offices. Navasky, after welcoming his guest, went on to note that the last occupant of the speaker’s chair in which he sat had been Alger Hiss. “What’s Alger doing now?”

Buckley asked. “He’s selling stationary.” “It just goes to show the Soviet Union hasn’t solved its unemployment problem yet,” the Man Who Would Be Mayor replied—a response Navasky characterizes as a display of his “peculiar combination of viciousness and wit.” Somehow, we are left in no doubt regarding the relative proportions of the two elements—in Victor Navasky’s mind, anyway.

The perception of invincible shallowness is heightened ineluctably by the social background of this memoir: the intellectual and cultural wasteland that is New York City. Provinciality on the scale of Casper, Wyoming, is only to be expected, while harmful to no one beyond the city limits of Casper, Wyoming. But provinciality on the scale of New York is as destructive of American civilization as it is appalling and unnatural in itself. (The provincial metropolis is surely a thing contrary to nature.)

Jane Austen described herself as working on a “little bit (two inches wide) of ivory.” Victor Navasky, by comparison, is working on a little bit of wallboard. Anyone wishing to understand how America since World War II has been transformed into the Sahara of the Bozart, and of the intellect itself, would do well to have a look at this book. *A Matter of Opinion* exposes in graphic detail a socially and intellectually restricted—and restrictive—Philistine class, the width and depth of a wood splinter, yet substantially in control of the nation’s newspaper of record, its elite journals of opinion, publishing houses, and major cultural institutions that, taken together, have managed to achieve the improbable feat of ideologizing and commercializing the intellectual and artistic discourse of what, despite all its shortcomings, was once a unique and interesting civilization. In fairness to Victor Navasky, we should admit the nearly insuperable difficulties in making an engaging story from the sordid facts. ■

Chilton Williamson Jr. is Senior Editor for Books at Chronicles. He is the author, most recently, of The Conservative Bookshelf.

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Summer Doldrums



I am on my sailing boat cruising off Corsica with Bill and Pat Buckley, Belgian Baron Lambert and his wife Marion, Dame Vivien Duffield, and the

mother of my children. We have taken shelter outside Calvi as the Mistral is blowing “the horns off a cuckold,” to use a French expression. The *Bushido* is the kind of ketch that fears no weather—steel-hulled, 120 feet long with a 10-foot draft and an experienced crew. We did close to 12 knots under sail earlier in the evening, leaving Cap Ferrat on the French Riviera at night, just as the storm was breaking, crossing the Ligurian sea to Calvi.

Politics are not usually discussed while on a rough beam reach, but once in a bay, everyone let it rip about the war. Bill Buckley admits that had he known then what he knows now, he never would have been in favor of it. Bill, of course, is an honest man, unlike some of those Pinocchio neocons. The rest, all European born and bred, shrug and throw their hands up in disgust. Their drift is that it didn’t take a genius to know it could not be done. In fact, I remember them predicting a disaster and a quagmire.

Personally, I am on record as having written that even if the Shi’ite mullahs had their opium prayers answered, they would never have expected to be accommodated as they have been by an American administration. If we keep this up, the whole Arabian Peninsula will soon be Shi’ite. Bravo Rumsfeld, bravo Cheney, and bravo to the rest of the pompous fools who think a college diploma in history or the law equips them to handle serious geopolitical matters.

America haters, none of whom would ever be allowed on my boat, have always insisted that Uncle Sam is ever

spoiling for a fight, a trigger-happy gangster, cocksure of himself and ready to blunder in to some faraway land in a blaze of howitzers and Old Glory. American gung-hoism, on parade in President Bush’s speech extolling the military as the highest calling in front of an audience of red-bereted soldiers, strikes many Europeans as an inversion of priorities. “What about doctors and nurses?” they ask.

Well, I agree with Bush, there is no higher calling than military service, and screw what Europeans think about doctors and nurses. But why embarrass the military by turning them into cops and

THE **AMERICAN PUBLIC** SUPPORTS A PROTRACTED CONFLICT IF IT IS CONVINCED THAT THE **CAUSE IS NOBLE**, IF THE WAR IS **BEING CONDUCTED AGAINST A REAL THREAT**, AND IF THEY BELIEVE THEIR **LEADERS HAVE A CLEAR STRATEGY FOR WINNING**.

targets in strange lands and leaving them to the mercy of fanatics willing to die for 72 virgins and lotsa rice? Go figure, as they say.

American presidents have always used the military like Napoleon, or better yet Grant, as cannon fodder and worse. LBJ and McNamara poured men into Vietnam, knowing full well the war was unwinnable in the manner they had chosen to fight it. In order to save face and not be the first American president to lose a war, 57,000 troops were sent to their deaths and hundreds of thousands of wounded to their wheelchairs.

My point is this: the American public supports a protracted conflict if it is con-

vinced that the cause is a noble one, if the war is being conducted against a real threat, immediate or emerging, and if they believe their leaders have a clear strategy for winning. None of this applies to Iraq. And it didn’t apply to Vietnam either. The people got turned off when they realized that Johnson was lying about the war and that he didn’t have the guts to challenge the Soviets and China by bombing Hanoi and Haiphong.

Iraq was never a noble cause except in the eyes of the neocons, more concerned with Israel’s safety than that of any American military personnel. The Iraq War was never against a real threat but very much against an imagined one. Iraq was the biggest enemy of the religious zealots who are now running Iran as well as Iraq. Finally, as everyone except for the hucksters in the Bush

administration knows, there is not and never was a clear strategy for winning the war, or better yet, the peace which didn’t follow Saddam’s fall.

The administration doesn’t know or understand what is actually going on. No one can set out a detailed path to victory against an insurgent enemy. In the end, the military will wind up holding the bag, Bush will go to his farm in Texas, Rumsfeld will crawl into the hole where he belongs, Wolfowitz will make lots of money and attend many diplomatic cocktail parties, and Douglas Feith will receive Israel’s highest decoration and move onto some Palestinian’s land. Have a pleasant summer. ■

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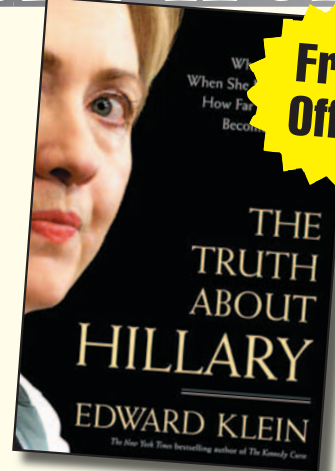
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